

أسوة حسان

THE SAHABIYAT ROLE MODELS FOR TODAY'S WOMEN

By
Maulana Abdus Salam Nadwi

Zam Zam



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ACCEPTANCE OF ISLAM

Politeness, soft-heartedness and giving preference to others over oneself is the essence of a pious person. It is through these qualities that he can accept every type of warning, instruction, culture, advice and guidance. The petals of a flower are swayed by the gentle morning breeze. However, certain healthy trees are not swayed by even strong winds. The rays of the sun can come through a window, but steel arrows cannot have any effect on certain stones. This is exactly the condition of man. A polite and soft-hearted person can accept any "true" call with ease while great miracles cannot influence certain hard-hearted persons. Examples of differences in temperament can be found everywhere. However, the entire history of Islamic propagation is filled with such examples. We know the names of many unfortunate unbelievers who did not submit to Allah Ta'âlâ despite countless efforts being spent on them. However, there are thousands among the Ṣaḥâbah who entered the fold of Islam immediately after hearing the call towards the Oneness of Allah Ta'âlâ. Together with the Ṣaḥâbah, many Ṣaḥâbiyât are included in this virtue. Not only are they included in this, but have also surpassed them in accepting Islam. Khadîjah radiyallâhu 'anhâ was the first to accept Islam without any sort of persistent effort and without any compulsion. Upon accepting Islam, she immediately submitted herself to Allah Ta'âlâ. Râfi' radiyallâhu 'anhu narrates that Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "I received prophethood on a Monday and Khadîjah offered ṣalâh at the end of that very day. 'Alî offered ṣalâh on Tuesday and he was followed by Zayd ibn Hârithah and Abû Bakr."

From the above narration we can deduce that the rays of light which shone on the first day from the sun of prophethood reverberated from the illuminated heart of a soft-hearted noble woman.

Proclaiming Islam

In the beginning of Islam, one needed more courage, bravery and determination in exposing one's Islam rather than accepting Islam itself. Despite the mockery, oppression and tyranny of the unbelievers, the Sahâbah, together with the Sahâbiyât, exhibited great courage in disclosing their Islam. Among the seven pious people who had accepted Islam in the beginning, six of them were men. They were, Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam himself, Abû Bakr, Bilâl, Khabbâb, Suhayl, 'Ammâr radiyallâhu 'anhum and the seventh was a poor Sahâbiyah, i.e. Sumayyah radiyallâhu 'anhâ, the mother of 'Ammâr radiyallâhu 'anhu.

The Sahâbiyât, with their pious disposition, not only accepted Islam willingly, but gladly propagated it as well. It is mentioned in Sahîh Bukhârî in Kitâbut Tayammum, that the Sahâbah captured a woman on one of their journeys and presented her to Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. She had containers filled with water and it was because of their need for water that they had captured her. However, when Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam took that water, he paid her for it according to its value. Upon seeing this piety of his, she immediately became convinced of his prophethood and accepted Islam. Because of this, her entire tribe also accepted Islam.

Bearing burdens which were imposed due to accepting Islam

Together with the Sahâbah, the Sahâbiyât also bore all types of burdens for the sake of Islam. This did not create even a shadow of doubt in their î mân.

When Sumayyah radiyallâhu 'anhâ accepted Islam, the unbelievers began imposing numerous difficulties upon her. The severest torment was that they used to make her stand on the hot sand of Makkah by tying her up with steel chains.

Despite this, she remained steadfast on Islam. One day, they tied her up as they normally used to and compelled her to stand in the hot sun when Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* happened to pass by. Upon seeing her, he said: "Have patience, you will be rewarded with paradise." However, the unbelievers were not satisfied with this punishment which they meted out to her. Abû Jahl martyred her by impaling a spear into her private part. She was thus blessed with the virtue of being the first martyr in Islam. This is a great virtue in favour of the Sahâbiyât that a Sahâbiyah was the first person to accept Islam, and a Sahâbiyah was the first person to be blessed with martyrdom.

When the sister¹ of 'Umar *radiyallâhu 'anhû* accepted Islam and he learnt of this, he assaulted her in such a manner that her entire body was bruised. Despite this, she unfalteringly said: "Do whatever you wish, I have already accepted Islam." 'Umar *radiyallâhu 'anhû* used to get extremely tired after hitting Lubînah² *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*. Thereafter he used to say to her: "I am not leaving you out of mercy for you, but because I have become exhausted." In the same way, he used to impose severe punishment on Zinnîrah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* who was a slave-girl in his family.

Severing relations upon accepting Islam

Upon accepting Islam, all the relations and family ties of the Sahâbah were cut-off. However, this did not cause any doubt in the strength of their îmân. In this matter, the condition of the Sahâbiyât was more intricate than that of the Sahâbah. Although man is dependant on the help and assistance of all his friends and close relatives, the life of a woman hovers entirely around the help and assistance of her husband. She cannot be

¹Her name was Fâtimah.

²She was a slave-girl in his family.

independent of him under any circumstances. A son can cut-off relations from his father and vice versa - and both can lead a normal life. However, when a woman separates from her husband, she becomes absolutely helpless and destitute. Despite this, many Sahâbiyât cut-off this intricate relationship for the sake of Islam and separated themselves forever from their unbelieving husbands. After the treaty of Hudaybiyyah, the following verse was revealed: "Do not maintain relations with unbelieving women." (60:10) Just as the Sahâbah divorced their unbelieving wives, many Sahâbiyât also left their unbelieving husbands and migrated to Madînah. Not a single one from among them returned to their former husbands. 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* says: "We do not know of a single woman who migrated and thereafter turned away from Islam."

BELIEFS

Tauhîd (Oneness of Allah)

The unbelievers imposed untold difficulties on the Ṣahâbiyât. Despite this, no word of polytheism issued from their mouths. They only uttered the kalimah of tauhîd.

When Umme Sharîk *radīyallâhu ‘anhâ* accepted Islam, her relatives took her out and made her stand in the hot sunlight. When she was in such a state and burning in the hot sun, they would feed her with bread and something “hot” like honey in order to make her feel thirsty but never gave her any water. After spending three days in this extreme difficulty, these tyrants said to her: “Leave the religion on which you presently are.” She had lost control over her senses to such an extent that she was unable to understand the meaning of these words. They therefore raised their fingers towards the skies. Upon seeing this, she understood that they wanted her to reject the Oneness of Allah Ta‘âlâ. She exclaimed: “I swear by Allah that I am still steadfast on this belief.”

Distancing themselves from polytheism

Generally, women hold on rigidly to their old habits, customs and beliefs. Polytheistic beliefs had spread for quite some time among the Arabs and had become firmly embedded in their hearts. However, immediately after accepting Islam, the Ṣahâbiyât very vociferously rejected those beliefs. It was the belief of the Arabs that the one who speaks ill of the idols is inundated by various illnesses. After accepting Islam, Zinnîrah *radīyallâhu ‘anhâ* became blind. Upon seeing this, the unbelievers began claiming that Lât and ‘Uzzâ³ had made her blind. However, she replied explicitly: “Lât and ‘Uzzâ are not

³Names of two idols.

even aware of those very people who worship them [so how can they cause this?] - this is in fact from Allah Ta'âlâ."

In the days of *jâhiliyyah*, the Arabs used to keep a razor under the bed of the child and they used to believe that in doing so the child will be protected from misfortunes. Once, 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* noticed a razor on the head-side of a small child. She stopped them [the parents] from doing this and said: "Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* used to detest charms of this sort."

The focal point of polytheism among the Arabs was the idols that were placed in every home. However, the *Ṣahâbiyât* expressed their loathing toward them on every occasion. When Hind bint 'Utbah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* accepted Islam, she broke and shattered all the idols that were in her house and remarked: "It was because of you that we were greatly deluded."

When Abû Talhah *radiyallâhu 'anhu* expressed his desire to marry Umme Sulaym *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*, she remarked: "O Abû Talhah! Don't you know that the god which you worship is a tree (i.e. a wooden idol) which has been uprooted from the ground and which has been made by a certain Abyssinian?" He replied: "I know that." She asked: "Are you not ashamed of worshipping it?" As long as he did not repent from this polytheism and proclaimed the oneness of Allah, she refused to marry him.

Belief in the prophethood of Muḥammad *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*

Apart from belief in the prophethood of Muḥammad *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* being firmly embedded in the hearts of the *Ṣahâbiyât*, it was firmly embedded in the hearts of their young daughters as well. Once Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* addressed a young girl saying to her: "May you not grow." Because of her firm conviction in Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu*

'alayhi wa sallam, she believed this and went crying to Umme Sulaym *radīyallāhu 'anhā* complaining to her that Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* made this evil *du'ā* against her, now she will never get older. Umme Sulaym went to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and asked: "Why did you make this evil *du'ā* against this poor child of mine?" Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* began to laugh and said: "I am a human being - I get happy as humans get happy and I also get angry as humans get angry. If I make a *du'ā* against a person which he does not deserve, it will become a source of purity, cleanliness and piety for that person."

'IBÂDÂT

Salâh

Offering ṣalâh in congregation

Although it was not incumbent on women to offer ṣalâh in congregation and, based on this, despite the fact that a few Ṣahâbah did not like their wives to attend the congregation, this did not deter a few Ṣahâbiyât. They used to offer their ṣalâh in congregation at appropriate times. 'Umar's *radiyallâhu 'anhû* wife used to regularly offer her 'ishâ and fajr ṣalâhs in congregation. Once a few people said to her: "Don't you know that 'Umar is not happy with this?" She replied: "Why does he not stop me himself?"⁴

Jumu'ah ṣalâh

Although jumu'ah is not compulsory on women, the Ṣahâbiyât used to honour this day greatly and earn the blessings of this day in beautiful ways. There was a Ṣahâbiyah who used to plant beet root in her garden. On Fridays, she used to cook this beet root and feed all the Ṣahâbah after the jumu'ah ṣalâh.

Ishrâq ṣalâh

Although Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* offered ishrâq ṣalâh only once in his entire life - as narrated by Umme Hânî *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* - a few Ṣahâbiyât used to offer this

⁴ The fact that 'Umar *radiyallâhu 'anhû* disapproved of this, shows that women attending the masjid is not approved of. However, he did not explicitly prohibit her from doing so because of the Ḥadîth of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* which states that women should not be stopped from going to the masjid. At the same time, we have to bear in mind the opinion of 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* when she said that had Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* been present in her era, he would have certainly prohibited the women from going to the masjid. It is on this basis that the 'ulamâ' do not condone women going to the masjid.

ṣalâh very regularly. 'Â'ishah *radīyallâhu 'anhâ* says: "Although I never saw Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* offering the ishrâq ṣalâh, I offer it regularly because he used to approve of many deeds but abstained from them himself so that they do not become compulsory on the ummah."

Tahajjud ṣalâh

When the Ṣahâbah used to offer tahajjud ṣalâh, the Ṣahâbiyât also joined them. When Umar *radīyallâhu 'anhû* used to awaken his family members for tahajjud, he used to recite the following verse: "And command your family members to offer their ṣalâh and you yourself remain steadfast on it. We do not ask you for sustenance. We give you sustenance. And the good outcome is for piety." (20: 132).

Abû Hurayrah *radīyallâhu 'anhû* used to divide the night in three parts: for himself, his wife, and his servant. They all used to take turns in offering tahajjud and they used to wake each other up.

Zakâh and ṣadaqât

Generally, women have a natural inclination and love for jewellery. However, the Ṣahâbiyât had more love for the pleasure of Allah Ta âlâ. Once, a Ṣahâbiyah came to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* with a daughter of hers. The daughter had thick gold bangles on her hands. Upon seeing these bangles he asked: "Do you give the zakâh for these bangles?" She replied: "No." He then asked: "Would you like it if Allah makes her wear bangles of fire on the day of judgement in place of these gold bangles?" Upon hearing this, she immediately removed the bangles and gave them to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* saying: "These are for Allah and His Rasûl."

Once Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* mentioned the virtues of ṣadaqah and charity while delivering the 'îd khutbah.

It was a gathering of the Ṣaḥâbiyât. Bilâl *radīyallâhu 'anhū* had a sheet spread out and the Ṣaḥâbiyât were throwing their ear-rings, necklaces and rings into it.

Asmâ' *radīyallâhu 'anhâ* had only one slave girl. She sold this slave girl and sat down with the money in her lap. Just then, her husband, Zubayr *radīyallâhu 'anhū* entered and said: "Give me that money." She replied: "I have already decided to give it in charity."

Charity to friends and relatives

Once the wife of 'Abdullâh ibn Mas'ûd *radīyallâhu 'anhū*, Zaynab *radīyallâhu 'anhâ*, said to him: "You are a poor person. Go to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and inform him that I have some *sadaqah* to give. If he permits, I will give it to you." Instead, Abdullâh ibn Mas'ûd asked her to go. When she reached Rasûlullâh's *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* house, she found another Ṣaḥâbiyah there who had also come for the same purpose. Both of them sent Bilâl *radīyallâhu 'anhū* who went and informed Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* saying: "There are two women who wish to give *sadaqah* to their husbands and a few orphans who are under their care. Is it permissible for them to do so?" Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* replied: "Yes. And they will receive a double reward - one based on their close relationship, and another for giving *sadaqah*."

Once Umm Salamah *radīyallâhu 'anhâ* asked Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*: "If I give *sadaqah* to the sons of Abû Salamah, will I be rewarded? I cannot leave them [in this poor state] because they are my sons." He replied: "Yes, you will receive the reward for this."

A Ṣaḥâbiyah had given her slave girl as *sadaqah* to her mother. When her mother passed away, she went and asked Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* as regards the ownership of this

girl. He replied: "You have already received the reward of *sadaqah*; and now this slave girl has come into your inheritance."

Assisting the poor according to their needs

The *Sahâbiyât* used to help the needy, both in life and death. *Ṣafīyyah radiyallâhu 'anhâ* came in the battle of Uhud and brought two pieces of cloth to serve as a shroud for her brother, *Hamzah radiyallâhu 'anhu*. However, she noticed an unclothed corpse of an *Anṣârî* lying next to her brother's corpse. She felt very ashamed that her brother be covered with two pieces of cloth and the *Anṣârî* not having even a single piece of cloth. When she measured both cloths, she found one longer than the other. She therefore cast a lot and gave the longer cloth to the one in whose favour the lot fell.

Fasting

Fasting continually

These days, our women-folk complain and find it difficult to keep the compulsory fasts while a few *Sahâbiyât* used to fast daily. That is, they used to fast all the time. *Abû Umâmah radiyallâhu 'anhu* used to constantly request *Rasûlullâh ṣallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* to make *du'â* on his behalf that he may attain martyrdom. Instead, *Rasûlullâh* used to make *du'â* for his well-being. Eventually, he asked him to show him such an act for which Allah Ta'âlâ will reward him abundantly. *Rasûlullâh ṣallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* ordered him to fast. He therefore began fasting continually. His wife and servant also joined him in fasting. This fasting of theirs became a salient feature of this household. If, on a certain day, any smoke rose from the chimney of their house, the people would conclude that there is a guest at their home. If it were not that, why would food be cooked there during the day?

Optional fasts

A few Ṣahābiyāt used keep optional fasts thereby causing inconvenience to their husbands. Their husbands stopped them from fasting, and this made them extremely unhappy. They therefore went to Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam and complained to him. However, the latter informed them that a woman cannot keep optional fasts without the permission of her husband.

Fasting on behalf of the deceased

The Ṣahābiyāt did not fast for themselves alone, but also kept fasts on behalf of their deceased. A Ṣahābiyah came to Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam and said: “My mother has passed away and a few fasts were compulsory on her. Can I keep those fasts on her behalf?” Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam granted her permission to do so (only she was specifically allowed),

I’tikāf

The Ṣahābiyāt had an extreme desire to sit in I’tikāf to the extent that when Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam ordered a tent to be pitched for i’tikāf, ‘Ā’ishah radiyallāhu ‘anhā set up her tent separately. On seeing this, all the other wives of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam set up their tents as well.

Hajj

Although hajj is compulsory only once in a lifetime, how could the Ṣahābiyāt be satisfied with performing it only once? They therefore used to try and perform the hajj every year. Once, ‘Ā’ishah radiyallāhu ‘anhā asked permission for jihād from Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. He replied: “The best jihād is an accepted hajj (hajj-e-mabrūr).” Thereafter, no year passed without her having performed hajj.

The eagerness and willingness that the Sahâbiyât had for the performance of hajj has been amply displayed to the world during the Hajjatul Widâ or Farewell Pilgrimage. When Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam announced his intention of performing hajj, Asmâ' bint Umayy radiyallâhu 'anhâ also began preparations to leave despite being pregnant.

Many Sahâbah were travelling in order to participate in the Hajjatul Widâ. During the course of the journey, a Sahâbiyah spotted Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. She rushed towards him, presented her child to him and asked if his hajj could also be performed. Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam replied in the affirmative and said: "And you will receive the reward."

The Sahâbiyât used to go to great lengths in making preparations to fulfil the important pillar of hajj. One Sahâbiyah had taken an oath to go to the Ka'bah on foot. When she asked Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam in this regard, he asked her to go on foot and by riding an animal as well. When they anticipated missing the hajj due to a valid reason, the Sahâbiyât used to become extremely distressed. During Hajjatul Widâ, Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ could not fulfil the hajj because of her monthly menstrual periods. Upon passing by her, Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam noticed her crying. He asked: "Why are you crying?" She replied: "I have not fulfilled my hajj as yet." He replied: "Glory be to Allah! This is a natural thing. Complete all the rites of hajj but do not make tawâf of the Ka'bah."

Hajj on behalf of parents

The Sahâbiyât did not perform hajj for themselves alone, but on behalf of their parents as well. During the Hajjatul Widâ, a Sahâbiyah came to Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam and said: "Hajj has become compulsory on my parents, but because of their old age, they cannot ride any animal. Can I perform

hajj on their behalf?" Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* permitted her to do so. Another *Ṣaḥâbiyah*'s mother had passed away. She came to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and asked: "My mother never performed hajj. Can I fulfil this duty on her behalf?" He granted permission to her as well.

'Umrah

Whether 'umrah is fard or not, the *Ṣaḥâbiyât* used to perform it very regularly. If they happened to miss it, they used to become extremely distressed. During the farewell pilgrimage, Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* announced that those who do not have their animals for sacrificing may perform the 'umrah. When he entered his tent he saw 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* crying. When he asked her the reason, she replied: "I have been excused because of my menstruation, but the people are getting double reward [for hajj and 'umrah] while I am only receiving one reward." He replied: "Do not worry, Allah will give you the reward of 'umrah as well. Nevertheless, he sent her with 'Abdur Rahmân ibn Abî Bakr⁵ *radiyallâhu 'anhumâ* to Tan'im where she donned the *ihrâm* for 'umrah and completed her 'umrah in half the night.

Jihâd

Desire for martyrdom

In the era of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, martyrdom was conceived to be an everlasting life. Therefore, every person was thirsty for this everlasting life. Umme Waraqah bint Naufal *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* was a *Ṣaḥâbiyah*. When the battle of Badr drew close, she went to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and said: "I should be granted permission to take part in jihâd. I will tend to the sick and

⁵ He was her brother.

perhaps I will also gain the status of martyrdom.” Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* replied: “Remain in your home, Allah will grant you martyrdom in it.” How could this miraculous prophesy of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* be wrong? She had made two slaves into *mudabbirs*⁶. Both of them martyred her so that they may speed up their freedom.”

Practising on the Qur’ân

The Quran had a very strong effect on the *Sahâbiyât*. Once ‘Â’ishah *radiyallâhu ‘anhâ* said to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*: “This verse of the Quran, ‘Whoever does any wrong will be recompensed for it,’ is extremely severe.” He replied: “O ‘Â’ishah! Don’t you know that even if a thorn pricks a Muslim, he will be recompensed for it from his sins?” She replied: “But Allah says: ‘He will take an account of every single sin.’” Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* replied: “This means that every deed will be presented to Allah. Only the person who has some dispute in his account will be punished.” The result of this influence which the Quran had on them was that the *Sahâbiyât* used to hasten towards acting upon the injunctions of the Quran. Hudhayfah ibn ‘Utbah *radiyallâhu ‘anhu* had made Sâlim *radiyallâhu ‘anhu* his adopted son. According to the customs of Jâhiliyyah, he had the same rights as that of a “real” son. But when this verse of the Quran: “Address them according to the names of their original fathers,” was revealed, his wife went to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* and said: “In the beginning, Sâlim used to live with us in our house and there was no purdah with him. Now, what is your ruling in this regard?” He replied:

⁶ A *mudabbir* slave is one whom his master tells him that he could obtain employment and purchase his freedom with the income that he obtains.

"Make him drink some milk [expressed from your breast] and he will become your breast-fed son."

In the times of *jâhiliyyah*, the Arab women used to be very negligent in wearing a head-covering. Because of this, their bosoms and heads used to be uncovered. Upon this, the following verse was revealed: "Women should tie their sheets over their bosoms." The effect of this was that the women tore their loin cloths and other clothing, made them into head-coverings, and covered and concealed themselves with black sheets in such a way that according to 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*, it was as if their heads had become crows' nests.

ABSTAINING FROM THE PROHIBITIONS OF THE SHAR'AH

Abstaining from musical instruments

Let alone singing and musical instruments. A Sahâbiyyah sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam disliked to hear the ringing of the bells that used to be around the camel's neck. When the sound of this ringing used to come from the front, she used to ask the camel driver to stop so that the sound does not reach her ears. Alternatively, when she used to hear this sound, she would ask the camel driver to increase his speed so that the sound of this ringing will be drowned by the speed.

Once, a girl who was wearing tinkling anklets, entered her house. Upon hearing the tinkling of these anklets, she ordered her not to enter her house with such items and said: "Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam said that angels do not enter a house in which such sounds are present."

Abstaining from doubtful things

It is mentioned in a Hadîth that you should abstain from those things that are doubtful and adopt those things in which there is no doubt. The halâl has been made clear, and the harâm has been made clear. However, in-between them are many doubtful things. The one who abstains from the doubtful will be the one who is the most cautious in abstaining from the harâm. The one who is not cautious with regard to the doubtful is most likely to commit that which is harâm. Sin is the sanctuary of Allah, and the one who grazes near the sanctuary, it is most likely that his herd will fall into the sanctuary.

The Sahâbiyât used to act upon this Hadîth with great fervour. A Sahâbiyah had given her slave in charity to her mother. When her mother passed away, there appeared a doubt over the ownership of this slave because she had given her in charity, and it is not permissible to take back the wealth of charity. Her

mother had become the owner over this slave and after her death, she inherited this slave. She could therefore receive her in inheritance. In order to remove this doubt, she went to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and explained the situation to him. He replied: "You have received the reward of charity and she has now come under your ownership as inheritance."

Asmâ's⁷ *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* mother, Qutaylah, was an unbeliever. Abû Bakr *radiyallâhu 'anhu* had divorced her in the times of *jâhiliyyah*. Once she came to Asmâ' *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* and presented her with several gifts. Since these gifts were from an unbeliever, she refused to accept them and asked 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* to ask Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* in this regard. Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* granted her permission to accept these gifts.

⁷ She was the daughter of Abû Bakr *radiyallâhu 'anhu* and the sister of 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*.

DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

Remembrance of Allah

Glorifying and remembering Allah is a salient feature of a pure religious life. This feature used to be found in the Sahâbiyât. Once, a Sahâbiyah had kept some pebbles or pits in front of her and was engaged in the remembrance of Allah. When Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam saw this, he asked her what is the need for this? I will show you something simpler than this. Thereafter, he taught her a particular *du'â*.

Visiting sacred places

The desire to attain blessings used to draw the Sahâbiyât towards the sacred places. Once, a Sahâbiyah fell ill. She therefore took a vow that if she is cured, she will go to Baytul Maqdis and offer salâh there. Upon recovering from her sickness, she made preparations for the journey. She then went to Maymûnah radiyallâhu 'anhâ in order to bid her farewell. Maymûnah asked her to offer this salâh in the Musjid-e-Nabawi because Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam said that offering one salâh in his musjid is better than offering 1000 salâhs in other musjids.

Once, a Sahâbiyah had taken a vow of going to Musjid-e-Quba on foot. However, she passed away before she could fulfil this vow. Abdullâh ibn Abbâs radiyallâhu 'anhu passed a verdict that her daughter should fulfil the vow for her.

Bearing physical harm in order to fulfil the obligations of the Dîn

The yearning and desire for *'ibâdah* eases all physical difficulties. This yearning and desire was found in the Sahâbiyât as well. They therefore bore all types of difficulties and fulfilled the injunctions of Islam wholeheartedly. Hamnah bint Jahash radiyallâhu 'anhâ was a Sahâbiyah. It was her

habit to be continually occupied in ṣalâh. She had a rope tied to the pillars of the masjid. Whenever she used to get tired, she used to take a rest by taking support from this rope. When Rasûlullâh ṣallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam saw this rope, he said: "She should only perform that amount of ṣalâh which is within her power. When she gets tired, she must sit down." He therefore ordered the rope to be unfastened and discarded.

Fulfilling one's oaths

We take oaths on trivial matters and do not realise what a serious responsibility this is. However, the Ṣahâbiyât used to take very few oaths. If they happened to take an oath, they would fulfil it. Once 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ became angry with 'Abdullâh ibn Zubayr⁸ radiyallâhu 'anhu and took an oath that she will not speak to him. When 'Abdullâh ibn Zubayr radiyallâhu 'anhu asked her for forgiveness and other Ṣahâbah also interceded on his behalf, she rejected them saying: "I have taken an oath, and to take an oath is a very serious matter." Eventually, after much persistence and intercessions, she forgave him. As an expiation for breaking the oath, she freed 40 slaves.

⁸ He was her nephew.

RESPECT FOR RASÛLULLAH *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*

Acquiring blessings from Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam

The Ṣaḥābiyât always used to acquire blessings from Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. Whenever any child was born, they used to first take the child to Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. He used to pass his hands over the child's head, chew some dates and place them in the child's mouth and then make *du'â* for the child.

Safeguarding the possessions of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam

The Ṣaḥābiyât had more love for the possessions of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam than for their own lives. 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ had a *jubbah* of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. When he passed away, 'Asmâ' radiyallâhu 'anhâ kept it with her and kept it safeguarded. Whenever anyone in her family fell ill, she would wash this *jubbah* and make the person drink its water so that he may be cured.

'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ safeguarded the clothes in which Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam had left this world. Once she displayed a Yemeni loin cloth and a shawl to a Ṣaḥābî and said: "I swear by Allah that Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam left this world in these very clothes."

Once a Ṣaḥābiyah had invited Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. After taking his meal, he drank water from a particular water-skin. She safeguarded this water-skin and when anyone used to fall ill or there was an occasion which demanded the acquisition of blessings, she would drink water from that water-skin and make others drink as well.

When Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* used to go to the house of 'Anas *radiyallâhu 'anhû*, his mother used to wring out his perspiration, fill it in a bottle and store it.

During the conquest of Khaybar, Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* made a *Ṣahâbiyah* wear a necklace with his own hands.⁹ She used to value this necklace to such an extent that she did not remove it for the rest of her life. When she was about to die, she made a bequest that it should be buried with her as well.

Once Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* went to the house of Umme Sulaym *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*. A water-skin was suspended in the house. He placed the mouth of the water-skin into his mouth and drank from it. Umme Sulaym *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* cut-off the mouth of this water-skin and kept it away as a means of remembrance.

Occasionally, Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* used to have a siesta at the house of Shafa bint 'Abdullâh *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*. Because of this, she made a special bed and loin cloth for him which he used to wear and have a rest on. These items were safeguarded by her family for quite some time. Eventually, Marwân took them away.

Respect for Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*

Whenever the *Ṣahâbiyât* came in the presence of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, they put on all their clothes out of respect and honour for him. One *Ṣahâbiyah* says: "I put on **all** my clothes and then went to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*."

⁹ This was permissible at that time because the rules concerning *purdah* were not revealed as yet. (Refer to *Musnad Ibn Hambal*, vol. 6, p. 380 for details)

If they unintentionally said something which showed disrespect to his status, they would seek forgiveness from him. The child of a *Ṣaḥābiyah* had passed away so she was crying over this calamity. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* happened to pass by, so he said: “Fear Allah and have patience.” She replied: “What do you know of the calamity that has afflicted me?” He continued on his way. People said to her: “That was Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* to whom you had spoken [in such a rough manner].” She hastened towards him and in a regretful tone she said: “I did not know that it was you.”

Supporting Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam

The *Ṣaḥābiyāt* had an extreme hope in their hearts to support and defend Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. Talīb ibn ‘Umayr *radiyallāhu ‘anhū* accepted Islam and thereafter informed his mother, Arwa bint ‘Abdul Muttalib about this. Upon hearing this, she said: “This person whom you have supported is most worthy of this support. Had we possessed the power and strength of men, we would have also protected him and fought on his behalf.”

Serving Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam

The *Ṣaḥābiyāt* used to regard serving Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* as their greatest honour and privilege. Salmā *radiyallāhu ‘anhā* served Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* with such devotion that she received the title “the servant of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*”. Safīnah was the slave girl of Salmā’s mother. She wanted to free her on condition that she spends the rest of her life in serving Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. She replied: “Even if you did not lay down this condition, I would have not stopped serving him till I die.”

The Awe-inspiring appearance of Rasûlullâh ṣallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam

The Ṣahâbiyât used to be so awe-inspired by the exalted spirituality of Rasûlullâh ṣallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam that they would tremble in his presence. Once Khadîjah radiyallâhu ‘anhâ saw Rasûlullâh ṣallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam sitting in the masjid. The effect of this humble and submissive state of his was that she began trembling.

Singing the praises of Rasûlullâh ṣallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam

Even the little daughters of the Ṣahâbiyât used to shower praises on Rasûlullâh ṣallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. When he migrated from Makkah and entered Madînah, the little girls began playing the *duff* and recited the following couplets:

*"We are the daughters of the Banû Najjâr tribe.
What a good neighbour Muḥammad is!"*

The women used to recite these poems:

*"A full moon has risen above us from the
Thanîyyatul Widâ. As long as an inviter invites
us to Allah, it is incumbent upon us to express
our gratitude to Him [for having sent to us such
a noble person as Rasûlullâh]."*

When ‘Â’ishah radiyallâhu ‘anhâ got married to Rasûlullâh ṣallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam and came to his house, little girls began playing the *duff* and reciting the poems on the incidents that had taken place at Badr. They also recited the following couplets:

*"And amongst us is a prophet who knows what
will occur tomorrow."*

Upon hearing them singing this, he stopped them and asked them to sing what they had been singing previously [that is, regarding Badr].

Adhering to the orders of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam

The Sahâbiyât used to adhere strictly to the orders and commands of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. He had prohibited the women from mourning the death of anyone except of their husbands for more than three days. The Sahâbiyât adhered so strictly to this that when the brother of Zaynab bint Jahash radiyallâhu 'anhâ had passed away, a few women came to meet her on the fourth day. On seeing them, she applied perfume to herself in the presence of all of them. She then said: "There was no need for me to apply any perfume. [But I did this] because I had heard Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam saying that it is not permissible for a Muslim woman to mourn the death of anyone apart from her husband for more than three days." She therefore did this in adherence to his command.

When Umme Habîbah's radiyallâhu 'anhâ father passed away, she applied perfume and oil to her body after the third day and said: "There was no need for me to do this. All I intended was to fulfil your command."

Once a beggar came to 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ and she gave him a piece of bread. Thereafter, a well dressed person came and she seated him and gave him an entire meal. The people objected to her because of this inequality and discrimination. She replied: "Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam said: 'Treat people according to their status.'"

Once Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam was coming out of the musjid when he saw men and women walking together on the street. He addressed the women saying: "Walk behind

them, you cannot walk in the middle of the road.” Thereafter, the women began walking on the side of the roads to such an extent that their clothes used to become dishevelled by touching the walls on the sides.

Seeking the pleasure of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam

The Sahâbiyât were always concerned about pleasing Rasûlullâh sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. If at any time he became angry or displeased, they used to try every possible means to re-gain his pleasure. When he left for Hajjatul Widâ (the last pilgrimage), all his wives also accompanied him. Unfortunately, the camel of Safîyyah radiyallâhu ‘anhâ got tired on the way and sat down. She therefore began to cry. When Rasûlullâh sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam came to know of this, he went to her himself and wiped the tears off her face with his blessed hands. The more he tried to stop her from crying, the more she cried. When he could not stop her, he reprimanded her and ordered all the people to dismount. He also pitched his own tent. Safîyyah radiyallâhu ‘anhâ realised that he was now angry at her. She therefore planned to regain his pleasure. She went to ‘Â’ishah radiyallâhu ‘anhâ and said to her: “You know that I cannot give my turn [my night with Rasûlullâh sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] to anyone in exchange for anything in this world. However, if you can gain the pleasure of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam for me, I am prepared to give you my turn.” ‘Â’ishah radiyallâhu ‘anhâ displayed her willingness for this and covered herself with a sheet which had been dyed in saffron. She then sprinkled some water onto it so that its fragrance will disseminate. She then went to Rasûlullâh sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam and lifted the curtain of his tent. Upon seeing her, he said: “‘Â’ishah, it is not your turn tonight!” She replied [with the following verse of the Quran]: “This is the favour of Allah. He grants it to whomever He wills.”

Entrusting affairs to Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam

For women, marriage is one of the most important matters. However, the Sahâbiyât had placed their entire trust in the hands of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. He therefore performed their marriage with whomsoever he wished and they gladly accepted his decision. Fâtimah bint Qays radiyallâhu 'anhâ was a Sahâbiyah. On one side, 'Abdur Raḥmân ibn 'Auf radiyallâhu 'anhu, a very wealthy Sahâbî, wanted to marry her. On the other side, 'Usâmah ibn Zayd radiyallâhu 'anhu was also interested. However, she handed the matter to Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam and said to him: "The whole affair is in your hands. You perform my marriage with whomsoever you wish."

Jalbib radiyallâhu 'anhu was a Sahâbî who was very humorous by nature. He even went to the extent of telling jokes and narrating humorous anecdotes on the streets. Because of this, he was generally not liked by the Sahâbah. Once, Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam sent a proposal to an Anṣârî girl on his behalf. She replied that she will consult with her mother first. When her mother heard Jalbîb's name, she rejected the proposal. But the girl said: "We cannot reject the proposal of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. Entrust me in Rasûlullâh's sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam hands and Allah will not allow any harm to come to me."

Hospitality to Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam

If out of some good fortune, the Sahâbiyât got the opportunity of having Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam as a guest, they would fulfil this duty with great honour, love and respect. Once he went to the house of Umme Ḥarâm radiyallâhu 'anhâ. She invited him for a meal which he accepted. He also took a siesta over there.

Once a Ṣaḥābī invited Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam to his house. After having eaten, Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam began preparing to leave. The Ṣaḥābī's wife lifted the curtain and said: "O Rasūlullāh! Send blessings upon me and my husband and then leave." Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam replied: "May Allah shower His mercy upon you and your husband."

At times the Ṣaḥābiyāt used to prepare a new dish and present it to Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. Once, Umme Ayman radiyallāhu ‘anhā sifted some flour, made roties¹⁰ out of it and presented them to Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. Upon seeing them, he asked: "What is this?" She replied: "This is generally eaten in our place. I felt that I should prepare some of it for you as well." However, due to his complete abstinence and forbearance, Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam said: "Mix some husk into the flour and then knead it."

Love for Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam

The hearts of the Ṣaḥābiyāt were filled with love for Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam and they used to express this love of theirs in different ways. Umme ‘Atīyyah radiyallāhu ‘anhā was a Ṣaḥābiyah. Whenever she mentioned the name of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam, she used to say "*bī abī*", i.e. may my father be sacrificed for you. This she said out of extreme love for him.

When Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam used to go out for any battle, the Ṣaḥābiyāt used to take vows for his safe return. Once when he returned from a battle, a Ṣaḥābiyah came to him and said: "O Rasūlullāh! I had taken a vow that if Allah

¹⁰ Flat round loaves of bread.

Ta'âlâ returns you safe and sound, I will play the *duff* and sing songs in front of you."

Yearning to be in the company of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam

The Ṣahâbiyât had a great desire to benefit from the company of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. Qaylah radiyallâhu 'anhâ become a widow and her children were taken away by their uncle. She was now free from all worldly responsibilities. She therefore accompanied a Ṣahâbî and presented herself in the blessed company of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. She gained benefit from Rasûlullâh's sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam teachings and instructions for the rest of her life.

VIRTUOUS CHARACTER AND MANNERS

Abstinence

The training and education of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* made every individual from among the *Sahâbiyât* a nucleus of self respect, self restraint and self honour. It is for this reason that they abstained from extending a begging hand to anyone. Generally, no one feels ashamed to ask his parents for something. But the sense of self respect that the *Sahâbiyât* possessed did not even permit them to ask their parents for anything in the presence of others. Fâtimah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* used to become extremely exhausted due to the numerous house-hold chores. A few slaves had come in the possession of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, so she went to him to ask him for a slave. However, when she saw that he was conversing with a few people, she immediately returned home out of shame and shyness.

Giving preference to others over oneself

Generosity is a great characteristic and virtue. But giving preference to others over oneself is the highest form of generosity. This characteristic was found in the most complete form among the *Sahâbiyât*. 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* had set aside a grave for herself next to the graves of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and Abû Bakr *radiyallâhu 'anhu*. However, when 'Umar *radiyallâhu 'anhu* asked her for that spot, she gave it to him and said: "I had set it aside for myself, but today I will give preference to you over myself."

Once she was fasting and there was nothing in the house except a piece of bread. A poor person came begging, so she asked her slave girl to give that bread to the beggar. The slave girl asked her: "With what will you open your fast?" She replied: "Just give it." In the evening someone sent some meat to her. Upon

seeing it, she called her slave girl and said to her: "This meat is better than your piece of bread."

Generosity

Islam gained a lot of strength and power through the generosity of the Sahâbiyât just as it did through the generosity of the Sahâbah. Umme Sulaym *radīyallâhu 'anhâ* bequested her oasis specifically for Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*.

'Â'ishah *radīyallâhu 'anhâ* was so generous that whatever came into her hands used to be given in charity. 'Abdullâh ibn Zubayr *radīyallâhu 'anhu* tried to stop her from this excessive generosity. She became upset and annoyed to such an extent that she took an oath not to speak with him anymore.

'Asmâ' *radīyallâhu 'anhâ* was even more generous than 'Â'ishah *radīyallâhu 'anhâ*. It was the habit of the latter to collect and store [the food and other articles]. When she had collected a substantial amount, she used to distribute it among the poor. Opposed to this, it was the habit of 'Asmâ' *radīyallâhu 'anhâ* not to keep anything for the following day. Whatever she received on a particular day used to be spent on that very day.

Once Munkadir ibn 'Abdullâh *radīyallâhu 'anhu* came to 'Â'ishah *radīyallâhu 'anhâ*. She asked him if he had any children. He replied: "No." She then said: "If I had 10 000 dirhams, I would have given them to you." Coincidentally, the Khalîfah, Mu'âwiyah *radīyallâhu 'anhu* sent some money to her that very evening. She thought to herself about the speed at which she was being tested. She immediately sent a person to call for Munkadir *radīyallâhu 'anhu* and gave him 10 000 dirhams. He purchased a slave girl with that money and got many children from her.

Among the noble wives of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, Zaynab bint Jahash *radīyallâhu 'anhâ* was extremely

generous. She used to tan leather with her own hands and whatever income she derived from this used to be given to the poor. Once Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam addressed his wives saying: "From among you, the one whose hands are the longest, will meet me [leave this world] first." Upon hearing this, the wives began measuring their hands. Zaynab's hands were the shortest. However, when she was the first one to pass away [after the demise of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam], the other wives realised that when Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam had said "longest hands", he meant "most generous".

Abstaining from taking revenge from one's adversary

When an enemy is struck by a calamity, there is no better time to take some sort of revenge from him. However, how could the love for Allah and His Messenger sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam which was filled in the hearts of the Ṣahâbiyât ever have any place for hatred and vengeance? There was a continual "passage of arms" between 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ and Zaynab radiyallâhu 'anhâ. However, when 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ was accused of adultery and Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam asked Zaynab radiyallâhu 'anhâ regarding the moral character of 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ, then instead of taking some sort of revenge, she said: "I am guarding my ears and eyes totally and I can say that I do not know anything but good about her." 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ herself attests: "Despite her being my rival, Allah Ta'âlâ saved her through her piety."

Let alone taking revenge, the Ṣahâbiyât did not even like to have any hatred in their hearts for anyone. Mu'âwiyah ibn Khudayj radiyallâhu 'anhû had killed Muḥammad ibn 'Abî Bakr radiyallâhu 'anhû who was the brother of 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ. Once he was appointed as a commander over an army. 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ questioned a person

regarding the leadership of Mu'âwiyah *radiyallâhu 'anhu*. The person replied: "There was no shortcoming in him. Everyone praised him. When any camel strayed away, he used to replace it with another one. When any horse died, he used to replace it with another horse. When any slave escaped, he used to replace him with another slave." Upon hearing this, 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* said: "I seek forgiveness from Allah if I were to have hatred towards him merely because he killed my brother. I have heard Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* making the following supplication: 'O Allah! The person who shows kindness to my ummah, You also show kindness to him. And the one who oppresses my ummah, You also be hard on him.'"

Hospitality

Umme Sharîk *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* was an extremely rich and generous *Sahâbiyah*. She had turned her house into a guest-house. It is for this reason that most of the guests who used to come to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* from far and wide used to stay at her house.

Self-honour

The *Sahâbiyât* were an embodiment of self-honour and respect. 'Abdullâh ibn Zubayr *radiyallâhu 'anhu* had visited his mother, 'Asmâ' *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*, on the very day that he was martyred. Upon seeing him, she said: "In facing death, do not accept any condition which will cause you to lead a life of submissiveness and humiliation. I swear by Allah that you should die with honour by means of a sword. It is far better than bearing a few lashes in a submissive and humiliating manner."

Patience and fortitude

Mourning the death of the husband, pulling one's hair, tearing apart one's clothing, singing out lamentations for lengthy

periods were all a common feature of Arabian life. However, the training that Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* imparted turned the *Sahâbiyât* into bastions of patience and fortitude. So much so, that once the son of 'Abû Talhah Anṣârî *radiyallâhu 'anhu* fell ill. The following morning he left his son and went to work. While he was away, his son passed away. His wife told the people around her **not** to inform 'Abû Talhah *radiyallâhu 'anhu* about this. Upon returning home, he asked his wife: "How is my son feeling?" She replied: "He is more at peace with himself than before." After saying this, she presented him with his meal which he partook of. In the morning, she asked him: "If someone lends something to a person and later the lender asks for its return, does the person who borrowed it have the right to refuse?" He replied: "No." She said: "So be patient over [the death of] your son as well."

When Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* returned from the Battle of 'Uhud, all the *Sahâbiyât* came to him in order to enquire about their relatives and beloved ones. Among these *Sahâbiyât* was Hamnah bint Jahash *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*. When she went to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, he said: "O Hamnah! Be patient over the death of your brother, 'Abdullâh ibn Jahash." Upon hearing this news, she read "*Innâ lillâhi wa innâ ilayhi râji'ûn*" and made a supplication of forgiveness (*du'â maghfirah*) for him. Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* then said to her: "Be patient over the death of your uncle, Hamzah ibn 'Abdul Muttalib *radiyallâhu 'anhu* as well." Upon hearing this, she again read "*Innâ lillâhi wa innâ ilayhi râji'ûn*" and made *du'â-e-maghfirah* for him and remained silent.

At the time when 'Abdullâh ibn Zubayr *radiyallâhu 'anhu* was waging a war against Hajjâj, the former's mother, 'Asmâ' *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* was ill. 'Abdullâh ibn Zubayr *radiyallâhu 'anhu* went to visit his mother. After enquiring about her health, he said: "There is a lot of comfort in death." She

replied: "Perhaps you hope that I will leave this world quickly [so that I do not experience a lot of pain]. But as long as any one of these two wishes of mine are not fulfilled, I would not like to die. My wishes are that either you become martyred so that I may exercise patience over your martyrdom, or that you succeed and win the war so that I may be pleased with you." Eventually, when he was martyred, Hajjâj hung him on a cross. Despite her physical weakness and condition, she came to watch this sad scene. Instead of crying and weeping, she turned in the direction of Hajjâj and said: "Hasn't the time come for this person who is suspended to be lowered?"

Bravery

The bravery that has been displayed by the Sahâbiyât is more amazing than that which was displayed by the Sahâbah in the battles. In the Battle of Hunayn, the attack of the unbelievers was so awesome that the entire battlefield was quivering. Despite this, the bravery of Umme Sulaym *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* was such that she was awaiting the enemy with a dagger in her hand. In the event of any unbeliever confronting her, she was ready to kill him. 'Abû Talhah *radiyallâhu 'anhu* noticed the dagger in her hand, so he asked her the reason for holding it. She replied: "I am waiting for an unbeliever to come near me so that I can thrust this dagger into his stomach."

In the Battle of Khandaq, Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* gathered all the women in a fortress. A Jew approached the fortress and began encircling it. When Safîyyah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* noticed him, she informed Hassân ibn Thâbit *radiyallâhu 'anhu* saying: "He appears to be a spy, go and kill him." He replied: "You know that I cannot do that." Safîyyah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* got down herself and removed a post from the fortress. She then struck him with such force that he died immediately.

Abstinence

The Sahâbiyât used to lead a life of absolute abstinence and asceticism. Once a person came to 'Â'ishah *radīyallâhu 'anhâ*. When he was about to enter the house, she said: "Wait a moment, I am just going to sew my old garment." The person replied: "If I were to inform the people about this, they would all regard you as being very miserly." She replied: "Those who do not wear old and tattered clothes will not be given new clothes in the hereafter."

Light-heartedness and liveliness

The fervour of the Sahâbiyât had made Islam "fresh and blooming". Light-heartedness and liveliness was therefore found in them. On the days of 'Îd, the young boys and girls used to go to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and play the *duff* in front of him and sing songs to him.

Secrecy

The bosoms of the Sahâbiyât were graves for secrets which could not be removed till *qiyâmah*. Once, all the wives of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* were sitting around him. Fâtimah *radīyallâhu 'anhâ* also came to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. He welcomed her and seated her on his right hand side. After seating her next to him, Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* whispered something into her ears which made her cry out aloud. Thereafter, he whispered something which made her smile. After Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* departed, all the wives asked her the reason for this. She replied: "I can never expose the secret of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* as long as he is alive."

Chastity

The lessons of pure character and purity that are taught by Islam were so firmly embedded in the Sahâbiyât that it made

them an embodiment of chastity. There was a Sahâbiyah whose moral character in the times of *jâhiliyyah* was not of a reputable nature. After having accepted Islam, a person tried to seduce her. She replied: "Get away from me! Those times are gone and Islam has arrived."

The effect of Islamic teachings was such that even slave girls began abstaining from illicit relationships. Musaykah was a slave girl. She came to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and complained to him that her master forces her to engage in intercourse with her. Upon this, the following verse was revealed: "Do not compel your slave girls into whoredom."

Committing such a major sin was impossible on the part of the Sahâbiyât. They could not even bear any *ghayr mahram* setting his eyes upon them. Mughîrah ibn Shu'bah *radiyallâhu 'anhu* wished to get married, so he went to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* for advice. Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* asked him to go and look at the woman first. Mughîrah *radiyallâhu 'anhu* went to the woman's house with the intention of looking at her with a view to marriage. The woman replied from behind a screen: "If Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* ordered you to do so, I will allow it. If not, you will have to swear by Allah."

Let alone committing such a sin, if any Sahâbiyah was accused of such a crime, she would lose all her senses and lose control over her mind. When 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* was accused of such a crime during the incident of *ifk*¹¹, she fell

¹¹ This refers to an incident which occurred on Rasûlullâh's *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* return from the expedition of Banû Mustaliq. Before Rasûlullâh's *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* caravan could return to Madînah, it stopped over at a place. The members of the caravan got off in order to fulfil their needs, relieve themselves, etc. 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* also got off. After fulfilling her needs, she returned to the caravan. Upon returning, she realized that her necklace had fallen down somewhere. She

unconscious, was overcome by a heavy fever, and began crying profusely.

therefore went back in search of it. By the time she returned to the place where the caravan had stopped, she discovered that the caravan had already departed. Those who were in charge of her camel did not realize that she was not on it because she was so light due to her young age. [It should be noted that in those days the women used to sit in an enclosed carriage which was placed on the camel. It was therefore not possible for anyone to know who was inside]. In the meantime, there was a Ṣahābī by the name of Safwān ibn al-Mu'ttal as-Sulamī radiyallāhu 'anhu who was also delayed. Upon reaching at the place, he found 'Ā'ishah radiyallāhu 'anhā. He immediately observed purdah, made her sit on his camel and led her until they caught up with the main caravan. No one paid any attention to this incident because there was nothing abnormal about it. However, the leader of the hypocrites, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Ubayy, found this an opportunity to accuse 'Ā'ishah radiyallāhu 'anhā of adultery and thereby dishonour Rasūlullāh sallullāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. Certain weak-faithed Muslims also began doubting her innocence. This created an uproar in Madīnah until Allāh revealed the following verses which completely absolved 'Ā'ishah radiyallāhu 'anhā of any crime. The verses are: "Those who brought forth the slander [against 'Ā'ishah] are a group among you. Consider it not a bad thing for you. Indeed, it is good for you. Every man among them will be paid that which he had earned of the sin, and as for him among them who had the greater share therein, his will be a great torment. Why then, did not the believers, men and women, when you heard it [the slander], think good of their own people and say: 'This [charge] is an obvious lie.'" (24: 11-12)

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND DEALINGS

Reconciliation and purity of heart

Whenever the Sahâbiyât became displeased or angry with anyone, they would become extremely sorry over this. Once 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ became angry with 'Abdullâh ibn Zubayr radiyallâhu 'anhu and took an oath that she will not speak to him. However, after forgiving him, whenever she used to think of this oath, she used to cry so profusely that her head-covering would become wet.

Maintaining good relationships

Zaynab radiyallâhu 'anhâ maintained very good contacts with her friends, relatives and near ones. 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ says: "I have not seen a woman more religiously-minded, more pious, more honest, and closer to her relatives than Zaynab."

'Asmâ' radiyallâhu 'anhâ had received a certain property in inheritance. In addition to this, Mu'âwiyah radiyallâhu 'anhu had given her 100 000 dirhams. However, she did not keep all this wealth for herself. Instead, she gave it to Qâsim ibn Muḥammad and Ibn Abî Atîq radiyallâhu 'anhumâ, both of whom were her relatives.

The friendly and cordial contacts which the Sahâbiyât had established were not restricted to their Muslim relatives only, but also extended to their *kâfir* relatives. 'Asmâ' radiyallâhu 'anhâ had emigrated to Madînah. Her mother, who was an unbeliever came to visit her and asked her for some financial assistance. Because she was unsure, 'Asmâ' radiyallâhu 'anhâ went to Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam and asked him if she could maintain good relations with her mother. Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam replied: "Yes." She went back and helped her mother. Safiyyah radiyallâhu 'anhâ had bequeathed a property for one of her Jewish relatives.

Exchanging gifts

It is mentioned in a Hadith that exchanging gifts is a means of increasing love. It is for this reason that the Sahâbiyât used to exchange gifts.

Nasîbah Anṣâriyah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* was so poor that she was eligible for zakâh. Despite this, she used to send gifts to the wives of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. Once she received a goat as *sadaqah*. After slaughtering it, she sent its meat to 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* as a gift. Barîrah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* also used to send whatever she received as *sadaqah* to the wives of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* as a gift.

Relations with servants and workers

The manner in which the Sahâbiyât used to deal with their servants and workers can be gauged from this incident alone... One night, 'Abdul Malik woke up and called for his servant. The servant delayed in coming, so he cursed him. Umme Dardâ' was present in his house. In the morning, she rebuked him saying: "How can you curse your servant when Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* has said that those who curse will not be interceders nor witnesses on the day of judgement?"

Mutual co-operation

The Sahâbiyât used to help and assist others whenever they were in problems. The majority of the Sahâbiyât used to help their neighbours in whatever way they could. Asmâ' *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* did not know how to make bread so her neighbour used to make it for her.

If the Sahâbiyât had any complaints against their husbands they used to come and inform 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*. She used to effectively convey their complaint to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and intercede on their behalf. Once a woman

wearing a green head-covering came to her, exposed a certain part of her body and showed her the place where her husband had beat her in such a way that it turned blue. When Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* came, she said to him: "The difficulties that the Muslim women are undergoing and bearing at present have not been experienced previously. Look at her skin, it has gone greener than her head-covering." In the *Sahîh Bukhârî*, at the end of this narration, the following words have been attributed to women: "It is the nature of women to help each other."

A person's wife had fallen ill. He went to Umme Dardâ' *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*. When she asked him about his wife, he replied that she was ill. Upon hearing this, she seated him and prepared a meal for him. As long as his wife remained ill, she continued enquiring about her health and continued feeding this person.

Visiting the sick

The *Sahâbiyât* used to visit the sick in every way possible. Once, a *Sahâbî* from among the *Ahlus Suffah* had fallen ill. Umme Dardâ' *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* mounted a camel and went to visit him.

Attending to the sick

The *Sahâbiyât* used to attend to the sick with great care and attention. 'Abdullâh ibn Maz'ûn *radiyallâhu 'anhu* had fallen ill. Ummul Haslâ' *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* and her entire family attended to him. When he was enshrouded after passing away, Ummul Haslâ' *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* said the following in a very endearing tone: "May Allah shower you with His mercy. I bear witness that Allah Ta'âlâ has honoured you."

Zaynab *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* was in her *maradul maut*, so 'Umar *radiyallâhu 'anhu* sent a message to the wives of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* enquiring as to who was prepared

to attend to her. All the wives replied that they will attend to her. When she passed away, he sent a message asking them who will bathe and enshroud her. They all replied that they will do so.

Condolences to the family of the deceased

The Sahâbiyât used to regard sympathising with the family of the deceased as their duty. Once Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam was returning after having buried a Sahâbî. On the way, he saw Fâtimah radiyallâhu 'anhâ, so he asked her the reason for her coming out of the house. She replied: "I went to that house in order to offer my condolences."

The method of condolences during the time of *jâhilîyyah* was that the women used to go to the family of the deceased and weep aloud together with the men. However, Islam wiped out this custom of *jâhilîyyah*. As a result, when any woman accepted Islam, a promise was taken from her that she will abstain from such customs. Once Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam wished to take such a promise from Umme 'Aṭîyyah radiyallâhu 'anhâ. She replied: "In the times of *jâhilîyyah* a certain family had come and mourned over our deceased. I will therefore have to go and mourn over their deceased in return." Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam permitted her to do so.¹²

Love for children

The Sahâbiyât had great love for children. Once a Sahâbî divorced his wife and wanted to take the child away from her.

¹² This permission was granted specifically to her and specifically for that particular family. She could not offer such condolences to any other family. Another explanation is that permission was granted provided the condolence was within the limits of the Sharî'ah. (Refer to the commentary of an-Nawawî on Sahîh Muslim, vol. 6, p. 477, Beirut edition)

She went to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and said: "My womb was his [child's] receptacle, my bosom was his water-skin¹³, and my lap was his cradle. Now his father has divorced me and wants to take him away from me." Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* replied: "As long as you do not enter into a second marriage, you have the greatest right of custody over your child."

Although the love for children was generally found in all the *Sahâbiyât*, this characteristic was particularly found in the women of the *Quraysh*. Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* himself praised them for this great characteristic when he said: "How great the women of the *Quraysh* are! They love their children and safeguard the possessions of their husbands."

Love for brothers and sisters

The *Sahâbiyât* loved their brothers' and sisters dearly. 'Abdullâh ibn Abî Bakr *radiyallâhu 'anhû* had passed away in Abyssinia and his body was buried in Makkah. Out of her extreme love for him, 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* came to his grave and recited a famous poem:

*"For quite some time we had lived together
like the two companions of Banû Khuzaymah.
[We were so close] that people began saying
that we will never be separated. However,
when we separated, it was as if Mâlik and I
did not even spend one night together
although we were together for so long."*

Hamzah *radiyallâhu 'anhû* was martyred in the Battle of Uhud. His sister, Safiyyah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* came into the battlefield in order to enquire about him. However, because the people felt

¹³ Referring to the fact that she breast-fed the child.

that she will become extremely grieved, they did not inform her. Eventually she went to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. He feared her losing her senses if she were to come to know about the incident. He therefore placed his hands on his chest. She read *Innâ lillâhi wa innâ ilayhi râji'ûn* and began to cry.

When Ruqayyah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* passed away, all the women began to cry. Fâtimah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* used to go to her grave and cry, and Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* used to wipe her tears with his hands.

Defending one's parents

The *Ṣahâbiyât* were not neglectful in protecting their parents even in difficult situations. Once, while Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* was in his *ṣalâh*, the *kuffâr* placed the intestines of a camel on his neck. Fâtimah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* hastened towards him, removed the intestines from his neck, threw them away, and rebuked the *kuffâr*.

The upbringing of orphans

The upbringing of orphans is a very virtuous act. It is mentioned in a *Ḥadîth* that Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: "I and the person who takes care of the orphans will be close together just as these two fingers are close together."

It is for this reason that the *Ṣahâbiyât* considered the upbringing of orphans to be their duty. Zaynab *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* used to take care of several orphans. Once she came to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and asked him: "Will it be permissible for me to give *sadaqah* to my husband and these orphans?" Another *Ṣahâbiyah* had also come to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* to ask a similar question. Bilâl *radiyallâhu 'anhû* informed Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* about the questions and

questioners. He replied: "Inform them that they will receive a double reward; one for maintaining good relations and another for giving in charity."

'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* had a brother by the name of Muḥammad ibn Abî Bakr *radiyallâhu 'anhu*. When his child was orphaned, 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* used to take care of him.

Safeguarding the wealth of orphans

As regards the safeguarding and protection of the wealth of orphans, Allah Ta'âlâ revealed a very comprehensive verse: "And test orphans until they reach a marriageable age..." On the basis of this verse, the *Ṣaḥâbiyât* not only safeguarded their wealth but also invested it. 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* used to give the wealth of orphans to people so that they may invest it in trade on behalf of the orphans.

The upbringing of children

The *Ṣaḥâbiyât* used to sacrifice their comfort and relaxation for the upbringing of children. When Umme Sulaym *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* was widowed, Anas ibn Mâlik *radiyallâhu 'anhu* was still a child. She therefore made a firm resolution that as long as he does not grow up considerably and completely, she will not enter into a second marriage. Anas *radiyallâhu 'anhu* himself acknowledges this fact in a grateful tone by saying: "May Allah Ta'âlâ reward my mother because she fulfilled her duty in taking care of me."

The *Ṣaḥâbiyât* loved Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* over everything else. Despite this, when Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* sent a proposal to Umme Hânî *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*, she excused herself and said: "O Rasûlullâh! You are more beloved to me than my own eyes. However, the rights of a husband are many. I fear that if I have to fulfil the rights of a husband, I will be unable to fulfil the rights of my children."

And if I occupy myself with the children, I will not be able to fulfil the rights of a husband.”

Safeguarding the possessions of the husband

The wife's safeguarding and protecting the wealth, possessions and home of her husband in an honourable way has a major impact on the social relationship between husband and wife. This trustworthiness was generally found in the Sahâbiyât. The wedding of 'Asmâ' bint Abî Bakr *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* had taken place with Zubayr *radiyallâhu 'anhu*. While she was in her house, a poor hawker came and asked her permission to sell his goods in the shade of her wall. She was strangely confused with this request. She wanted to grant him this permission open-heartedly and generously. However, she could not grant him permission without obtaining the permission of her husband first. She said to him: "If I permit you and Zubayr refuses, I will be in problems. You better come when Zubayr is present and then ask me." He came later and said: "O mother of 'Abdullâh! I am a person who is in need. I wish to sell my goods in the shade of your wall." She replied: "In the whole of Madînah, is this the only house you could find!" Zubayr *radiyallâhu 'anhu* said: "What harm will come to you that you are preventing a poor person from doing his business?" This was her actual intention, i.e. he should give the permission himself. This poor person was thus permitted. She was extremely generous and therefore liked to give charity and sadaqah. However, she did not have anything except the wealth of her husband and she was unable to spend from her husband's wealth without his permission. Eventually, she went to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and asked him: "If I give any charity from the wealth of Zubayr, will I be committing a sin?" He told her to give whatever she could.

Although this characteristic was generally found in all the Sahâbiyât, it was particularly found in the women of the

Quraysh. Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* praised them for this characteristic of theirs in the following words: "How great the women of the *Quraysh* are! They love their children and protect the possessions of their husbands."

Pleasing the husband

The *Sahâbiyât* used to take great care in gaining the pleasure and happiness of their husbands. Khawlâ' *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* used to sell perfume. Once she came to 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* and said: "I apply perfume to myself every night, I adorn and beautify myself like a bride, and I go and sleep next to my husband solely for the pleasure of Allah Ta'âlâ. Despite all this, he does not even look at me and turns his face away. I then turn him towards me, but he still turns away." When Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* arrived, she mentioned this to him as well. He replied: "Go and remain in the obedience of your husband."

Once Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* noticed some silver rings in 'Â'ishah's *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* hands, so he asked: "O 'Â'ishah! What is this for?" She replied that she had them made so that she may beautify and adorn herself for him.

A *Sahâbiyah* had come in the presence of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. She was wearing some gold bangles, so he stopped her from wearing them. She replied: "If a wife does not beautify and adorn herself for her husband, she will be disliked by him."

Love for the husband

The *Sahâbiyât* used to have extreme love for their husbands. Zaynab *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* had married Abul 'Âs. He was still an unbeliever when the Battle of Badr took place and was captured. Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* wished to

free the prisoners of war by accepting ransom from them. Zaynab *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* therefore sent one of her special necklaces which Khadîjah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* had given to her at the time when she got married, and paid the ransom for Abul 'Âs.

When Hamnah bint Jahash *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* received the news of the martyrdom of her husband, she began screaming out of extreme love for him. 'Umar *radiyallâhu 'anhu* was not excessively occupied with his family. Because of this, his wife, 'Âtikah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* used to kiss his head out of extreme love for him even when she was fasting:

'Âtikah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* used to love her first husband, 'Abdullâh ibn Abî Bakr *radiyallâhu 'anhu* a lot. When he was martyred in Tâ'if, she composed the following ode for him: "I have taken an oath that my eyes will remain sorrowful over you, and my body will remain untidy."

Thereafter, 'Umar *radiyallâhu 'anhu* married her. 'Alî *radiyallâhu 'anhu* who was also present in their *walîmah*, reminded her about the ode which she had composed, so she began crying. When 'Umar *radiyallâhu 'anhu* was martyred, she also composed an ode to him. Thereafter, she married Zubayr *radiyallâhu 'anhu*. When he was martyred, she composed an ode to him as well.

Serving the husband

The *Ṣaḥâbiyât* used to serve their husbands with full devotion. Due to his extreme caution with regard to purity, Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* used to have his *miswâk* washed repeatedly. 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* used to fulfil this noble task. Once he wrapped a shawl around him and entered the *musjid*. A *Ṣaḥâbî* said to him: "O Rasûlullâh! I notice a dirty spot on it." Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* gave it to one of the slaves and sent it to 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*. She

ordered for a container of water and washed the shawl with her own hands. She dried it and sent it to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. When he used to tie or remove his *ihrâm*, 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* used to apply perfume on his blessed body.¹⁴ When he used to send the sacrificial animal to the Ka'bah, she used to tie the collar around its neck.

When the *Sahâbah* used to be deprived of the help and assistance of the entire world, only their wives used to be with them in this lonely and destitute situation. Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* had become displeased with Hilâl ibn 'Umayyah *radiyallâhu 'anhû* because he had remained behind from participating in the Battle of Tabûk. All the Muslims were ordered to boycott him. Eventually, his wife was also ordered to sever relations with him. As a result of this, she came to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and said: "He is an old man and he does not have any servants to attend to him. If I assist and serve him, will you be displeased?" Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* replied: "No."

No matter how obedient and willing a woman may be, once relations with her husband are cut-off, she is unable to be inclined towards him again. However, the *Sahâbiyât* broke this natural principle as well. A *Sahâbî* had pronounced *zihâr* on his wife. In other words, he had made her *harâm* upon himself for a specified period. Despite this, she remained occupied in his service.

¹⁴ The applying of perfume while in *ihrâm* is not permissible. However, it is permissible to do so before donning it and after removing it.

WAY OF LIFE

Poverty

In the beginning of Islam, the Sahâbiyât used to lead a life of extreme poverty and deprivation. The effect of this poverty and deprivation used to become apparent in the clothing, houses, household effects, personal effects and in every thing else of theirs.

Clothing

The Sahâbiyât experienced great difficulty in obtaining clothes. The sheet of Fâtimah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*, the most beloved of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, was so small that once she tried to cover her entire body from Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* out of respect and shame but was unable to do so. When she covered her head, her legs were exposed; and when she covered her legs, her head was exposed.

Some of the Sahâbiyât did not even possess a sheet. When Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* granted them permission to attend the 'îd gâh, a Sahâbiyah came to him and asked: "What should a woman do if she does not possess a sheet?" He replied that another woman should lend her a sheet.

At the time of marriage, even the poorest of persons will prepare a beautiful trousseau for the bride. However, the Sahâbiyât were unable to acquire even a simple, basic trousseau. 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* says: "I had a dress which was made of a course cloth. When any woman was being dressed for her marriage, she would borrow this dress from me."

Housing

The houses of the Sahâbiyât used to be extremely simple, low, and of no value. They did not have toilets in their homes and therefore had to go into the desert at night in order to relieve

themselves. They did not have any curtains on their doors and they did not even possess any source of light which they could put on at night.

Household effects

The houses of the Sahâbiyât had extremely simple possessions, to the extent that a husband and wife had only one small mattress on which they could sleep. Furthermore, this mattress was made of palm leaves.

Jewellery

The Sahâbiyât used very simple and basic jewellery. After examining the books of Hadîth, one learns that they used to wear armbands, bracelets, ear-rings, necklaces, rings and anklets. They also used to wear nose pins. The necklace of 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ which had got lost on a journey was from Yemen.

Cosmetics

The Sahâbiyât used to use *surmah* and *mehendi*. After delivery of a baby, they used to apply *wars* (a reddish colour grass) on their faces. They used to apply the paste of this grass on their faces so that marks and spots that are on the face will disappear. They used to use saffron, *'itr* and *sik* in their perfume. *Sik* is a type of fragrance which is applied to the head.

Carrying out tasks on their own

The Sahâbiyât used to fulfil their domestic tasks on their own and they used to bear the severest difficulties in fulfilling these tasks. Fâtimah radiyallâhu 'anhâ was the most beloved of Rasûlullâh's sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam daughters. Despite this, she used to grind the wheat with her own hands so much so that blisters developed on her hands. On account of carrying water, her chest also developed blisters. On account of sweeping, her clothes became dirty and untidy.

The wives of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam used to take turns in carrying out domestic tasks. Once it was the turn of 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ. She ground the wheat, made bread out of it and awaited the return of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. He was delayed in returning, so she fell asleep. When he came, he woke her up.

'Asmâ' radiyallâhu 'anhâ was the daughter of Abû Bakr radiyallâhu 'anhu. She was married to Zubayr radiyallâhu 'anhu. He was so poor that he did not possess anything except a horse. 'Asmâ' radiyallâhu 'anhâ used to go on her own into the fields and bring grass for the horse. Later, Abû Bakr radiyallâhu 'anhu sent her a slave and thereby absolved her from this work. Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam gave a piece of land to Zubayr radiyallâhu 'anhu as a grant. This land was about five kilometres out of Madînah. 'Asmâ' radiyallâhu 'anhâ used to go there daily and carry the pits of dates on her head. After pounding these pits, she used to feed it to her camel which used to draw water for her. Apart from carrying out the basic domestic tasks, she used to carry water [for her domestic use]. If the water bag burst, she used to stitch it. She used to grind wheat and make bread out of it.

Apart from carrying out domestic tasks, the Ṣaḥâbiyât also used to occupy themselves with handicrafts. Saudah radiyallâhu 'anhâ used to tan the leather that used to come from Tâ'if. Due to this, her financial position was better than all the wives of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. Some of the Ṣaḥâbiyât used to sew clothes as well.

Purdah

The method of purdah was not extremely strict in the [initial] era of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. At the same time, the women were not absolutely exposed and free. They used to travel in a *mihfah* (a special type of carriage which concealed the woman who was travelling), don the *niqâb*, and

observe purdah from *ghayr mahrams*. 'Ā'ishah *radiyallāhu 'anhā* says: "During *hajjatul widā*', whenever anyone came in front of us, we would cover our faces with a sheet. Once they passed by, we would open our faces again."

Once Aflah ibn Abil Qays *radiyallāhu 'anhu* came to meet 'Ā'ishah *radiyallāhu 'anhā*. She immediately concealed herself. Upon this he said: "Why are you observing *purdah* with me? I am your uncle." She asked: "How are you my uncle?" He replied: "My brother's wife had breast-fed you." She replied: "A man did not breast-feed me!"

The son of a *Sahābiyah* was martyred. She donned the *niqāb* and went to tend to him. Upon seeing her like this, the *Sahābah* remarked: "You have come to find out about the martyrdom of your son and that too in *purdah*?" She replied: "I may have lost my son but I have not lost my shame and modesty."

In our times *purdah* is something that is customary and superficial, e.g. if a woman observes *purdah* with a *mahram* on a customary basis, she will continue observing *purdah* with him forever. But if she were to encounter a *ghayr mahram* on several occasions, she will very soon break all the limits of *purdah* with him. However, the *Sahābiyāt* were not bound by this customary *purdah*. Their *purdah* was in total conformity with the Sharī'ah. If the Sharī'ah permitted them to come in the presence of a certain person, they would do so. However, the moment the Sharī'ah laid down limitations in this regard, they would immediately observe *purdah* with that very person. It is the opinion of 'Ā'ishah *radiyallāhu 'anhā* that it is not necessary to observe *purdah* with one's slaves. It is for this reason that she used to come in the presence of Abū 'Abdullāh Sālim *radiyallāhu 'anhu* who was a very pious slave, and even speak to him on an informal basis. One day he came and informed her that Allah Ta'ālā freed him and that he was no longer a slave. 'Ā'ishah *radiyallāhu 'anhā* immediately

observed purdah with him and did not come in his presence for the rest of her life.

TRANSACTIONS

Fulfilment of debts

‘Â’ishah *radiyallâhu ‘anhâ* used to take loans very often. Someone asked her the reason for taking loans and putting herself in debts so often. She replied: “Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said that the person who has the intention of fulfilling his debts, Allah Ta‘âlâ appoints Himself as his helper [in fulfilling his debts]. So I am doing this in the hope of obtaining His help and assistance.”

Waiving of debts

Umme Salamah *radiyallâhu ‘anhâ* had made a slave into a *mukâtab*¹⁵. When he wished to begin payment in order to free himself, she asked him to subtract a certain amount from the actual amount, which he did [and thereby obtained his freedom at a price lower than that which was agreed upon].

Justice and equity in the distribution of inheritance

Abû Bakr *radiyallâhu ‘anhu* had given a few date trees to ‘Â’ishah *radiyallâhu ‘anhâ* as a gift. However, she had not taken possession of the trees as yet. This act of giving to her was therefore incomplete.¹⁶ When Abû Bakr *radiyallâhu ‘anhu* was about to leave this world, he said to her: “If you had taken possession of the trees which I had given to you they would have been under your ownership. However, they are now included in my estate, the inheritors of which are your brothers

¹⁵ A *mukâtab* slave is one who is permitted to pay for his freedom at a price stipulated by his master. Upon payment of the stipulated price, he is free.

¹⁶ This is because one of the conditions when presenting something to a person is that the latter must take possession of it. Only then will he become its owner.

and sisters. You should therefore distribute the inheritance according to the laws laid down in the Quran." 'Â'ishah *radīyallāhu 'anhâ* replied: "Even if there was more wealth than this, I would have left it for them."

SERVICES RENDERED

As regards political participation of the Sahâbiyât, there isn't anything worth mentioning. It is only in the book *al-Isâbah* that mention is made of Shifâ' bint 'Adawîyyah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* that 'Umar *radiyallâhu 'anhû* used to give preference to her opinions and respect her as well. She also rendered certain services related to the market place. Apart from political participation, the Sahâbiyât rendered every possible service to Islam, the details of which may be gauged from the following topics.

Religious services

Propagation of Islam

As regards religious services, the propagation of Islam is the most important contribution. From the very beginning of Islam, the wonderful efforts of the Sahâbiyât are also included. Umme Sharîk *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* used to secretly invite the women of the Quraysh towards Islam from the very outset. When the Quraysh learnt of her activities, they banished her from Makkah.

During one of the battles, the Sahâbah went out in search of water due to extreme thirst. Coincidentally, they came across a woman who had a water skin. The Sahâbah presented her before Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and consumed the water after obtaining his permission. Although they had paid her for the water, the Sahâbah were so grateful for this kindness of hers that when they were invading her village, they did not attack her house and the houses of her family. The effect of this favour of theirs was such that she influenced her entire family to accept Islam.

Umme Hakîm bint al-Hârith *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* was married to Ikramah ibn Abî Jahal. She accepted Islam on the day Makkah was conquered by the Muslims. However, her husband fled to

Yemen. She travelled to Yemen and invited him towards Islam. He accepted Islam and presented himself before Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. Upon seeing him, he leapt with joy.

When Abû Talhah *radiyallâhu 'anhû* was still an unbeliever, he wished to marry Umme Salîm *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*. However, she replied: "You are an unbeliever and I am a Muslim. How can we marry? If you accept Islam, it [your acceptance of Islam] will be my dowry. I will not ask you for anything else." He accepted Islam and his acceptance of Islam was regarded as the dowry.

Protecting the new Muslims

Those who used to accept Islam during the initial stages of Islam were forced to give up their homes, wives, families, relatives, wealth, properties, etc. Based on this, together with the propagation of Islam, the most important service that could be rendered was protecting and taking care of the new Muslims. The *Ṣahâbiyât* took up a major portion of this task. The house of Umme Sharîk *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* had become a sort of guest house for these new Muslims. There were so many new Muslims in her house that Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* did not permit Fâtimah bint Qays *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* from observing her *'iddah* in this house, because it would have been extremely difficult for her to observe the *purdah* on account of the many people who were living there.

Durrah bint Lahab *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* was also very generous and used to constantly feed the Muslims.

Serving the mujâhidîn

Just as the *Ṣahâbah* used to participate in the battles with great enthusiasm, the *Ṣahâbiyât* did not wish to remain behind in this noble act. Their most valuable task was to bandage and tend to

the wounded and try and comfort the *mujâhidîn*. They used to fulfil this task with great sincerity and dedication. Several *Sahâbiyât* participated in the battle of *Khaybar*. When Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* learnt of this, he asked them in a very displeased tone: "With whom did you come and who granted you permission to come?" They replied: "O Rasûlullâh! We cut wool and through that we come and assist in the path of Allah. We have all the medication and other necessities for the wounded, we pick up the arrows of the *mujâhidîn* and hand it over to them, and we make them drink *sattû*."¹⁷

Umme 'Atîyyah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* had participated in seven battles with Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. She used to guard the possessions of the *mujâhidîn*, prepare the meals and tend to the sick and wounded.

'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* participated in the battle of *Uhud*. She and Umme Salîm *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* used to carry water skins on their backs and supply the people with water.

Rabî' bint Mas'ûd *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* says: "We all used to participate in the battles. We used to supply water, serve the *mujâhidîn* and carry the wounded and the dead right to Madînah."

Rafîdah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* had pitched a tent in Musjid-e-Nabawî. She used to tend to all the wounded who used to be brought into her tent. Sa'd ibn Mu'âdh *radiyallâhu 'anhû* was wounded in the battle of *Khandaq*. He was tended to in this very tent.

These services of the *Sahâbiyât* used to be highly appreciated by the *Sahâbah* themselves. The *khulafâ'* themselves used to

¹⁷ A beverage made of barley.

appreciate this. Once 'Umar *radīyallāhu 'anhu* began distributing sheets among the women of Madīnah. After distributing all, one expensive sheet remained. Someone told him to give it to his wife, Umme Kulthûm *radīyallāhu 'anhâ*. He replied: "Umme Salīt was more entitled to it because in the battle of *Uhud* she used to bring water for us, which we used to drink."

Attending to the mosques

The *Ṣahābiyât* used to take great care in keeping the mosques clean and tidy. Once a person spat in the Musjid-e-Nabawī. When Rasûlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* saw this, he became so angry that his face turned red. A *Ṣahābiyah* got up and wiped it off and applied fragrance in its place. Rasûlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* became extremely happy and praised her for what she did.

There was a *Ṣahābiyah* who always swept the Musjid-e-Nabawī. This was such a noble act that Rasûlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* used to value her tremendously. When she passed away, the *Ṣahābah* buried her on that very night and did not inform Rasûlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* about her death. When he learnt of her death, he asked them: "Why did you not inform me that she passed away?" They replied: "O Rasûlullāh! You were relaxing and we did not want to disturb you."

Elimination of innovations

An innovation is like a nausea for the *dīn*. Many prominent *Ṣahābiyât* therefore took particular precautions in ensuring that this nausea does not take a footing in Islam. For example, as a result of the respect that Muslims have for the cover of the *Ka'bah* when a new cover is put on, they bribe the servants into obtaining the old cover. They bring it considering it to be a source of great blessing. They keep it in their homes, distribute

it among their friends, place the Quran into it, suspend it in the mosques, and blow it on the sick. However, this state of affairs was not found in the beginning of Islam. The trustee of the *Ka'bah* used to bury the old cover into the ground so that it was not utilised by the impure hands of man [he used to do this out of respect and honour for the cover]. Shaybah ibn 'Uthmân who was the main trustee of the *Ka'bah* at that time mentioned this incident to 'Â'ishah *radīyallâhu 'anhâ*. She immediately understood that this honour and respect for the cover of the *Ka'bah* was not in accordance with the Sharî'ah and that Allah and His Rasûl *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* had not ordered this. It was also possible that this would lead to corruption of beliefs and innovations in the future. She therefore said to Shaybah: "This is not correct. Once the cover of the *Ka'bah* is removed and a person touches it with impure hands, even then there is no harm in this. Instead [of burying it], you should sell the old cover and the money you receive for it should be given to the poor and the travellers."

Ihtisâb

That which maintains *dîn* and ethics on correct principles and foundations is known as *ih̥tisâb* in the Sharî'ah. Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* laid down three stages for it. He said: "Whoever among you sees an evil being perpetrated should try to set it right with his hand. If he is unable to do so, then with his tongue. If he is unable to do so, then with his heart. And this is the weakest stage of *îmân*."

Many prominent *Sah̥âbiyât* fulfilled this religious service through the first two methods. Once 'Â'ishah *radīyallâhu 'anhâ* went to a house as a guest. Her hostess had two daughters who were approaching the age of maturity. She noticed that they were offering *ṣalâh* without covering themselves with a sheet. She emphatically informed them that in future no girl should offer *ṣalâh* without properly covering

herself because Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* had ordered this.

Once 'Â'isha's *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* brother, 'Abdur Rahmân ibn Abî Bakr *radiyallâhu 'anhû* came to her house. He made his *wudû'* in a great hurry and began to leave. Upon seeing this, she said: "O 'Abdur Rahmân! You should always make your *wudû'* in the proper manner because I heard Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* saying that the limb which does not get wet in *wudû'* will be cursed by hell."

Once she saw a woman wearing clothing which had crosses on it. She immediately reproached the woman, asked her to remove it, and informed her that whenever Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* saw such clothing, he used to tear them apart.

Once her niece, Hafṣah bint 'Abdir Rahmân came to her wearing an extremely flimsy head covering. The moment she saw it, she tore it apart angrily. She then said: "Don't you know all the rules which Allah Ta'âlâ revealed in *Sûrah Nûr*¹⁸?" She then purchased another thick head covering and made her niece wear it.

Moral contribution

Prohibiting people from playing games of amusement

After the conquest of non-Arab lands, draughts, chess and cock-fighting became vogue among the Arabs. The *Sahâbiyât* warned against this very vociferously. 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* had a few tenants living in her house. She heard that they play draughts. She became extremely angry and sent a message

¹⁸ Many injunctions concerning purdah and related matters are mentioned in this *sûrah*. Women should make a point of studying this *sûrah* in detail.

to them informing them that if they do not throw the draught beads out of her house, she will have them evicted.

Alcohol

After the conquest of non-Arab lands, the Arabs were introduced to new forms and new brands of alcohol. One of them was wine. Since the Arabs refer to alcohol as *khamr* and this was only referred to *khamr* that is made from grapes, they therefore had a doubt with regard to the ruling concerning this wine. However, 'Â'ishah *radīyallâhu 'anhâ* had no doubt concerning this. She went to the extent of openly announcing that wine vats should not be used even to soften dry dates. She then addressed the women informing them that even if they experience any intoxication with the water that is stored in their containers, it will be prohibited. This was because Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* prohibited us from consuming all intoxicants.

The prohibition of using false hair (wigs)

Among the many moral evils that were prevalent among Jewish women was that those who lost their hair attached false hair to their heads. However, Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* had prohibited women from doing this. When the women started using this false hair after the demise of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, the *Ṣahâbiyât* emphatically prohibited them from doing so. Once a woman said to 'Â'ishah *radīyallâhu 'anhâ*: "My daughter is about to get married. Because of a sickness, her hair has fallen off. Should I attach false hair to her head?" She replied that Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* cursed such women.

Intellectual contribution

The science of Tafsîr

The Quran is such a divine and sacred book that even if a single verse is revealed concerning a particular person, it would be sufficient for the honour of that person. Based on this, Zaynab *radiyallâhu ‘anhâ* used to be very proud of the verse that was revealed concerning her marriage.

‘Â’ishah’s *radiyallâhu ‘anhâ* necklace had got lost on one of her journeys. Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* sent a few *Ṣahâbah* in search of it. While they went searching for it, *ṣalâh* time approached. The people offered their *ṣalâh* without making *wudû’*. When they returned, they mentioned this to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. Upon this, the verse concerning *tayammum* was revealed. Usayd ibn Hudayr *radiyallâhu ‘anhû* considered this to be indicative of ‘Â’ishah’s *radiyallâhu ‘anhâ* great status. He addressed her saying:

“May Allah reward you. Whenever you experienced any problem, Allah Ta‘âlâ provided you with a solution and placed blessings¹⁹ in it for the Muslims.”

The following verse was revealed with reference to Khaulah *radiyallâhu ‘anhâ* who was the wife of ‘Ubâdah ibn *Ṣâmit radiyallâhu ‘anhû*:

“Allah has heard the saying of her who has disputed with you [Muḥammad]...” (Sûrah al-Mujâdah)

¹⁹ The blessings alluded to is the injunction of *tayammum* which is certainly a blessing and a great source of ease and convenience for the Muslims.

This verse raised her status to such an extent that once ‘Umar *radiyallâhu ‘anhu* was returning from the masjid when he met her on the way. He greeted her. She replied: “O ‘Umar! I remember the time when the people used to merely address you as ‘Umar in the market of ‘Ukkâz. Now you are addressed as *Amîrul Mu’minîn*. You should therefore fear Allah when it comes to your subjects. And have full conviction in the fact that when a person fears the punishment of Allah, those who are far from him will come near him. And the person who fears death, will always have the fear of erring.” A person who was with him said: “O sister, you have spoken quite harshly to the *Amîrul Mu’minîn*.” ‘Umar *radiyallâhu ‘anhu* said: “Leave her alone. She is Khaulah bint Hakîm and the wife of ‘Ubâdah ibn Sâmit. Allah had heard her speech from the seven heavens [referring to the above-mentioned verse]. ‘Umar is therefore more duty-bound to listen to her.”

A single verse of the Quran is sufficient for the honour and respect of man. However, an entire *sûrah* was revealed about the Sahâbiyât, i.e. *Sûrah an-Nisâ’*. This *sûrah* specifically deals with injunctions applicable to the Sahâbiyât and their social life. Several verses of *Sûrah an-Nûr* make specific reference to them. Apart from this, many other verses concerning the Sahâbiyât were revealed.

Although the circumstances of revelation (*sabab-e-nuzûl*) and interpretation of these *sûrahs* and verses were known to most of the Sahâbiyât, understanding the *tafsîr* of the Quran in a particular way and being called a *mufasssîr* was a prerogative of ‘Â’ishah *radiyallâhu ‘anhâ*. She was on par with the senior Sahâbah. She has given the interpretation of very intricate verses. Her narrations which deal with the *tafsîr* of the Quran may be divided into two categories. One of them is that a certain matter may have crossed her mind and she had a doubt over it. She therefore asked Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* for an explanation, e.g. once Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu*

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'alayhi wa sallam said: "The person who is accounted on the day of judgement will be punished." Upon hearing this, 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* said: "O Rasûlullâh! But Allah says in the Quran: 'an easy account will be taken from him'?" He replied: "This refers to the preliminary hearing of the deeds. As for the person who has some shortcoming in his actions, he is certainly destroyed."

On one occasion she said: "O Rasûlullâh! Allah says: 'On the day when the earth will be changed with another earth, and the heavens [will also be changed] and they will come forth to Allah, the One, the Almighty.'" It is mentioned in another narration that she had read the following verse: "When the whole earth shall be in His hand on the day of resurrection, and the heavens shall be rolled in His right hand."

After reading this verse, she asked him: "When there will be no land and no heavens, where will the people be?" He replied that they will be on the *ṣirât*.

There is a verse in the Quran the translation of which is: "And those who give that which they give with hearts afraid because they are about to return to their Sustainer." (23: 60)

'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* had a doubt concerning this verse in that those who are thieves, adulterers, alcoholics, etc. but they fear Allah; are they also included in this verse? To this Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* replied: "No. O 'Â'ishah! This refers to those who are regular in their *ṣalâh*, who keep fasts, who pay their *zakâh*, and then they fear Allah."

The second category are the verses whose meaning was not clear to other companions. They used to ask 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* concerning these verses and she used to convincingly remove their doubts and queries. Examples:

(1) Running between *Ṣafâ* and *Marwah* is one of the rites of *hajj*. The Quranic verse related to this rite is as follows:

“Surely Safâ and Marwah are among the signs of Allah. So whoever makes the hajj of the house of Allah or performs the ‘umrah, there is no sin for him that he makes the tawâf between the two.” (2: 158)

‘Urwah *radiyallâhu ‘anhu* asked her: “O my aunt! This means that even if anyone does not go around them, there will be no harm.” She replied: “O my nephew! You are not correct. If the verse meant what you have understood it to be, then Allah would have said: ‘There is no sin in **not** going around them.’ This verse was originally revealed with regard to the *Anṣâr*. Prior to Islam, the *Aus* and *Khazraj* [two tribes from among the *Anṣâr*] used to worship the idol *Manât*. This idol was placed on *Mushallal*. Therefore, they considered it evil to go around Safâ and Marwah. When they accepted Islam, they went to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* and addressed him thus: ‘We used to do this prior to accepting Islam. What is the rule now?’ It is upon this that Allah revealed the verse that they should go around Safâ and Marwah and that there is no harm in doing so.”

Abû Bakr ibn ‘Abdur Rahmân was a scholar of Hadîth. When he learnt of this explanation of ‘Â’ishah *radiyallâhu ‘anhâ*, he remarked: “This is what you call knowledge.”

(2) There is a verse in the Quran which states the following:

“Until the prophets became despondent and they felt that they have been belied, Our help came.”
(12: 110)

‘Urwah asked: “Were false promises made to them (*kudhibû*) or where they belied (*kudhdhibû*)?” She replied: “They were belied.” Upon this ‘Urwah said: “They had full conviction that they were belied and that their people rejected their claims to prophethood. This was not a feeling or a thought [as mentioned

by the Quran, but a full conviction]. Therefore, *kudhibû* 'false promises were made to them' is correct. She replied: "I seek refuge from Allah! The prophets of Allah cannot attribute such thoughts to Allah by thinking that false promises of help and assistance were made to them." 'Urwah asked: "So what is the meaning of this verse?" She replied: "It refers to the followers of the prophets. When they believed and testified to their prophethood, their people began taunting and oppressing them. They [the followers] perceived a delay in the help of Allah to the extent that the prophets became despondent of those who had rejected *îmân*. Based on this, they became worried that those who have believed also do not begin belying them. Allah's help came immediately thereafter."

(3) The verse in which permission is granted to marry four women at once reads thus:

"If you fear that you will be unable to act justly with orphans, then marry women two two, three three or four four." (4: 3)

At face value, there seems to be no connection between the first part of the verse and the second part. What relationship is there between acting justly with orphans and the permission to marry four women? Based on this, a person presented this question to 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*. She replied by saying that the reason for the revelation of this verse is that some people used to become legal guardians (*walî*) over the orphans. In doing so, they establish a relationship of inheritance. Based on the strength of their guardianship, they desire to marry them and thereby take possession of their properties and other belongings. Because these orphan girls have no one to speak on their behalf, these people used to oppress them as they wished. Allah addresses these people by saying that if you are unable to act justly with regard to these orphan girls, then marry women

besides them - two, three or four. But do not bring them [orphan girls] under your absolute control by marrying them.

(4) There is another verse in this same sūrah:

“They seek your permission in the marriage of women. Say: “Allah grants you permission concerning them and that which is recited to you in the Quran. So the order is concerning those orphan women to whom you do not give that which is specified for them and you desire to take them into your marriage.” (4: 127)

The same person asked for the meaning of this verse. She replied by saying that in this verse it is stated that before this whatever has been mentioned in the Quran concerning them has been recited to you. Here reference is actually made to the previously-mentioned verse. This rule is in reference to those guardians who do not wish to marry their orphan girls because they are not beautiful, nor do they wish to get them married to someone else because they fear that their [the orphans'] wealth will go out of their [guardians] control.

(5) The people differ in the meaning of the following verse:

“The one who is rich should abstain from it, and the one who is poor should partake thereof in an equitable manner.” (4: 6)

This verse was revealed with reference to the guardians of orphans, that is, if they are poor, it is permissible for them to eat from the wealth of the orphans. However, according to Ibn ‘Abbās *radiyallāhu ‘anhu*, this verse has been abrogated by the following verse:

“Those who eat the wealth of orphans unjustly are in fact eating the fire in their stomachs.” (4: 10)

However, the punishment mentioned in this verse is applicable to those who eat the wealth of orphans unjustly. 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* states that the verse in which permission has been granted to eat is in reference to those people who oversee the wealth of orphans and tend to their businesses. If the guardian is rich, he should not take any compensation for this service of his. But if he is poor, it is permissible for him to take provided it is done equitably and according to his status. Based on her interpretation, there is no contradiction between the two verses.

(6) The verse which refers to a woman having a grievance against her husband reads as follows:

“If a woman fears antagonism from her husband or his lack of interest [in her], then there is no harm if they reconcile. And reconciliation is best.” (4: 128)

Effecting a reconciliation in order to remove disgruntlement is a common method. What was the need for Allah to mention this specifically? 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* states that this verse refers to that woman whose husband does not come to her, or that woman who is old and therefore unable to tend to her husband. Fulfilling the normal marital relations is a religious obligation imposed on both husband and wife. However, in this special case, if a woman does not wish to be divorced and is prepared to forgo her marital rights, then this mutual settlement is not considered to be evil. In fact, it is better than complete separation.

Apart from the above-mentioned verses, the interpretation of other verses by 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* also appear in the books of Hadîth. Apart from her insight, the other fact which becomes apparent from these interpretations of hers is her grasp and full understanding of those verses which are connected with marriage and divorce matters of women, how

well she comprehended them, and how well she remembered them. The reality of the situation is that if women wish to protect their rights, they should pay particular attention towards acquiring knowledge of the Quran and Hadîth.

The science of mysteries of the religion (Asrârud Dîn)

This science of *asrârud dîn* refers to the science in which the underlying reasons and circumstances of the injunctions of the Sharî'ah are explained, and in which the benefits and the wisdom behind each rule is explained. This science is so intricate, that only a few Sahâbah who were proficient in Islamic jurisprudence were able to prepare its basic principles and regulations. These few Sahâbah were 'Umar, 'Alî, Zayd, 'Abdullâh ibn 'Abbâs and a few others *radiyallâhu 'anhum*. As for the other Sahâbah, their endeavours in this science are very limited; especially that of the Sahâbiyât whose contribution in this regard is not seen anywhere. However, the mysteries and secrets which 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* laid bare, amply compensate for the deficit that is found in the Sahâbiyât in this regard. In fact, her contribution seems to outweigh that of the Sahâbah. The contribution of the Sahâbah with regard to the different aspects of this science is mentioned in the different books of Hadîth. However, the number of *masâ'il* which 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* explained, is more than that which they explained. She has surpassed the above-mentioned Sahâbah in lifting the veil off the mysteries and secrets of the Sharî'ah and has profusely explained the underlying reasons and circumstances of different *masâ'il*. For example, because the moral condition of the women in the time of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* was dependable, they were permitted to offer their *salâh* with congregation in the mosque. However, when there was a moral degeneration among them towards the latter part of her life, she clearly stated: "Had Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* seen the changes which women initiated into their lives, he would have

prevented them from coming to the mosque just as the women of the Banû Isrâ'îl were prevented from doing so."

There are several differences and peculiarities between the *sûrahs* that were revealed in Makkah and those that were revealed in Madînah, e.g. the subject matter in the Makkan *sûrahs* predominantly deals with beliefs and the hereafter, while the Madinan *sûrahs* contain the gradual introduction of orders and prohibitions. Because Islam came to an ignorant people, they were informed of heaven and hell in an advisory and admonishing way. Once the people became influenced and convinced by this, the rules, regulations, orders and prohibitions were revealed. If abstention from adultery, drinking alcohol and other vices was commanded from the very first day, who would have taken heed to this alien and unfamiliar command? Orientalist scholars pride themselves in their ability to distinguish such differences and peculiarities. However, 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* unveiled these differences from the very beginning. The *Sahîh Bukhârî* mentions the following narration from her: "The first *sûrah* to be revealed is the *Sûrah Mufasssal*, in which paradise and hell are mentioned. When the people became inclined towards Islam, the issues of *halâl* and *harâm* were revealed. If the first thing to be revealed was that you should not consume alcohol, the people would have said: 'We will never leave alcohol.' If it was revealed that you should not commit adultery, they would have said: 'We will never leave adultery.' When I was still a little girl playing around in Makkah, the verse 'Their promised day is the day of resurrection, and the day of resurrection is extremely severe and very bitter.' was revealed. *Sûrah al-Baqarah* and *Sûrah an-Nisâ'* were only revealed after I was with him [Rasûlullâh]."

Prior to the advent of Islam, the tribes of Madînah were occupied in inter-tribal warfare. The result of this was that the majority of their leaders, who normally posed a hindrance to

every new movement in order to secure and preserve their leadership, were killed. The *Anṣār* were so broken by these wars that when Islam came, they all considered it to be a mercy. Since most of their leaders were already killed, there were no immediate hindrances to their accepting Islam. In this way, Allah paved the way for the progress of Islam in Madīnah even before the emigration to that city. The philosophical history of Europe has come to this conclusion today. However, ‘Ā’ishah *radīyallāhu ‘anhā* had shown us this long before them: “The battle of Bu‘āth²⁰ was an incident which Allah had created from the very beginning for His Rasūl *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. When he arrived in Madīnah, the unity of the *Anṣār* had already crumbled and their leaders had already been killed. In order for them to enter Islam easily, Allah had therefore orchestrated this incident²¹ before-hand.”

When one is on a journey, the four rak‘at ṣalāhs are reduced to two rak‘ats. Outwardly, it would seem that two rak‘ats were dropped off in order to make things easy. However, ‘Ā’ishah *radīyallāhu ‘anhā* provides the reason for this: “In Makkah, two rak‘ats of ṣalāh were compulsory. Thereafter, Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* emigrated to Madīnah. Four rak‘ats were made compulsory, and ṣalāh while on a journey was left at its original number (i.e. two rak‘ats).”

Allah permitted His worship all the time. However, it is narrated from ‘Umar *radīyallāhu ‘anhu* that no ṣalāh after ‘aṣr and fajr is permissible to the extent that even *sunnah* and *nafl* ṣalāhs are also not permissible. It would seem that there is no

²⁰ This battle was fought between the *Aus* and *Khazraj* tribes. The *Anṣār* of Madīnah belonged to these two tribes. This battle which was fought between these two tribes continued for a period of 120 years.

²¹ Referring to the battle of Bu‘āth.

reason for this prohibition. However, 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* explains the reason for this. She says: "Umar has misunderstood. Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* prohibited this so that no one delays his *ṣalâh* until the time of sunset or sunrise."

In other words, there must be no doubt of imitating the sun-worshippers at the time of this *'ibâdah*.

It is mentioned in the *Aḥâdîth* that Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* used to offer *nafl ṣalâh* while sitting. Based on this, people who do not even have any excuse consider it to be desirable to offer *nafl ṣalâh* while sitting. A person came and asked 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* whether Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* used to sit down and offer his *ṣalâh*. She replied : "This was at such a time when the people broke him." That is, when he became weak and old." There are similar *Aḥâdîth* in *Abû Dâ'ûd* and *Muslim* from which it has been established that he used to do this on account of weakness and old age.

When the two rak'at *ṣalâhs* were increased to four rak'ats after the emigration to Madînah, why was the *maghrib ṣalâh* not increased to four? 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* gives the reason for this: "Because it is the *witr* of the day." In other words, just as the *ṣalâh* of the night [*ishâ*] has three rak'ats of *witr*, *maghrib ṣalâh* is the *witr ṣalâh* of the day.

At the time of *fajr*, everything is more tranquil and peaceful than the rest of the day. Therefore, the number of rak'ats for *fajr ṣalâh* ought to have been more. Instead, it is less than all the other *ṣalâhs*. 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* explains the reason for this: "There has been no addition to the number of rak'ats in *fajr* because the *qirâ'ah* [recitation of the Quran] in these two rak'ats is very lengthy." In other words, the shortfall in the number of rak'ats has been compensated by a long *qirâ'ah*.

The people of pre-Islamic times used to fast on the day of 'âshurâ'.²² Prior to the promulgation of fasting [of Ramadân], fasting on this day was also compulsory on the Muslims. Ahâdîth of this sort have been reported by 'Abdullâh ibn 'Umar *radiyallâhu 'anhu*. However, he does not give the reason for this fast being compulsory on the Muslims. 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* furnishes us with the reason. She says: "Prior to the promulgation of fasting, the Arabs used to fast on the day of 'âshurâ' because it was on this day that the *Ka'bah* used to be covered.

Some of the rites of *hajj*, such as *tawâf*, running on specified places, standing in certain places, throwing stones in certain places, etc. apparently seem to be futile. However, 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* says: "Making *tawâf* of the *Ka'bah*, running between *Ṣafâ* and *Marwah*, and throwing stones has been prescribed for the remembrance of Allah."

One can also gauge from certain Quranic verses that these rites were a form of 'ibâdah in the time of Ibrâhîm 'alayhis salâm. Since *hajj* is in commemoration of Ibrâhîm 'alayhis salâm, the same forms of 'ibâdah are prescribed.

There is a valley near Makkah by the name of Muḥassab. Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* had stopped over at this place during the days of *hajj*. The *khulafâ'-e-râshidîn* also used to stop over at this place. Based on this, 'Abdullâh ibn 'Umar *radiyallâhu 'anhu* considered this stopping over to be a sunnah of *hajj*. However, 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* did not consider this to be so. She explains the reason for this stopping over: "The reason for Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* stopping over at this place was because it would be easy for him to continue on his journey from here [after having taken a

²² The 10th of Muḥarram.

good rest over here].” Ibn ‘Abbâs *radīyallâhu ‘anhu* and Abû Râfi‘ also agree with her in this *mas’alah*.

Once Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* had ordered the *Sahâbah* that they should not keep the meat of *qurbânî* beyond three days. Many *Sahâbah* considered this order to be applicable forever. However, many other *Sahâbah* considered this order to be applicable to that time only. ‘Â’ishah *radīyallâhu ‘anhâ* also shared the opinion of the latter group. She explains the reason for this: “It does not mean that the meat of *qurbânî* becomes *harâm* after three days. Instead, the reason for this was that at that time very few people could afford to make *qurbânî*. Therefore Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* gave this order so that those who made the *qurbânî* will have to give some meat to those who could not afford to do so.”

This *Hadîth* of ‘Â’ishah *radīyallâhu ‘anhâ* is related in *Sahîh Muslim* in the form of a story. The villages around Madînah were experiencing a drought so Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* issued the above-mentioned order. The following year when there was no drought, he abrogated this order of his. Salamah ibn Akwa‘ *radīyallâhu ‘anhu* narrated a similar *Hadîth* as well.

On one side of the *Ka’bah* is a lower wall which is in the shape of a semi-circle. This wall is called the *ḥaṭîm*. This wall falls within the *tawâf* (i.e. one goes around it and not within it when making the *tawâf*). It may have crossed every person’s mind that why should this wall which is out of the *Ka’bah* be included in the *tawâf*? This question crossed the mind of ‘Â’ishah *radīyallâhu ‘anhâ* as well, so she asked Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* saying: “O Rasûlullâh! Is this little wall also a part of the *Ka’bah*?” He replied: “Yes.” She asked: “Then why did the people not include it with the *Ka’bah* when they were building it?” He replied: “Your people did not

have sufficient funds; they therefore made it smaller.” She then asked: “Why is the door of the *Ka’bah* so elevated?” He replied: “They did this so that they could permit or prevent whomever they wished from entering it.”

Ibn ‘Umar *radīyallāhu ‘anhu* says that if this narration of ‘Ā’ishah’s is correct, we can deduce the reason for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* not kissing the corners of these two walls. However, the question arises that when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* knew that the *Ka’bah* is not built on its original foundation, then based on the fact that he was the reviver of the *Sharī‘ah* of Ibrāhīm *‘alayhis salām*, it was his duty to break it down and rebuild it on its original foundation. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* himself gives the reason for not doing this: “O ‘Ā’ishah! If your people were not so close to the era of ignorance, I would have destroyed the *Ka’bah* and rebuilt it on the foundation of Ibrāhīm.”

These days, the *hijrah* is understood as leaving one’s house and family and settling down in Madīnah irrespective of how safe a haven one’s original place of inhabitation may be. However, ‘Ā’ishah *radīyallāhu ‘anhā* explains the reality of the *hijrah* by saying: “Now there is no *hijrah*. The *hijrah* was applicable at that time when a Muslim had to flee with his religion to Allah and His Rasūl *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* out of fear that he will be harassed for adopting a new religion. However, Allah has now granted power to Islam, and Muslims can worship Him wherever they wish. However, the reward for *jihād* and an intention is still applicable.”

After the demise of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, the *Ṣaḥābah* differed as to where he should be buried. It is mentioned in one narration that Abū Bakr *radīyallāhu ‘anhu* said that a prophet is buried at the place where he dies. However, ‘Ā’ishah *radīyallāhu ‘anhā* explains the actual

reason for this: When Rasûlullâh *ḡallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* was in his *maradul maut*, he said: “May Allah send His curses on the Jews and Christians for turning the graves of their prophets into places of prostration.” ‘Â’ishah *radiyallâhu ‘anhâ* says: “If this was not the case, his grave would have been in an open field. However, because there was a fear of his grave being turned into a place of prostration, he was buried in his bedroom.”

The science of Hadîth

With regard to the narration of Hadîth, the *Muhaddithûn* have divided the Sahâbah into five different stages. The Sahâbiyât are also found in almost all these stages:

The first stage: Those Sahâbah who narrated 1000 or more Ahâdîth. ‘Â’ishah *radiyallâhu ‘anhâ* is included in this category.

The second stage: Those Sahâbah who narrated 500 or more Ahâdîth. There is no Sahâbiyah in this category.

The third stage: Those Sahâbah who narrated between 100 and 500 Ahâdîth. Umme Salamah *radiyallâhu ‘anhâ* is included in this category.

The fourth stage: Those Sahâbah who narrated between 40 and 100 Ahâdîth. There are many Sahâbiyât who are included in this category. Some of them are: Umme Habîbah, Maymûnah, Umme Atîyyah Anṣârîyyah, Hafsah, Asmâ’ bint Abî Bakr, Umme Hânî *radiyallâhu ‘anhunna*.

The fifth stage: Those Sahâbah who narrated 40 or less Ahâdîth. Many Sahâbiyât are included in this category as well. Some of them are: Umme Qays, Fâtimah bint Qays, Rabî ‘ bint Mas‘ûd, Sabûrah bint Safwân, Kulthûm bint Husayn Ghifârî, Jadâr bint Wahb *radiyallâhu ‘anhunna*.

The science of Dirâyah

Apart from the narration of Ahâdîth, the science of explanation (*dirâyah*) of Ahâdîth was also initiated by the Sahâbiyât. 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* has made a critical examination of certain Ahâdîth and thereby laid down certain principles for this branch of knowledge. For example, when someone related the Hadîth to her saying that the deceased is punished when his relatives cry over him, she refused to accept this Hadîth on the basis of *dirâyah* and quoted the following Quranic verse: "No one will bear the burden of another's sins." Based on this verse, she said that the act of crying over the deceased is that of the relatives, why should the deceased be punished for this crying of theirs? From this, a principle was established that a Hadîth which is against the clear injunctions of the Quran cannot be accepted. Based on this principle, many other Ahâdîth have come under scrutiny. For example, during the era of the Sahâbah it was widely believed that Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* had seen Allah Ta'âlâ on the night of *mi'râj*. However, when this was mentioned to 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* she stated that the person who holds such a belief will go to hell. She quoted the following verse in order to substantiate her belief: "Vision does not comprehend Him, but He comprehends [all] vision. He is kind, all-knowing." (6: 103)

When this Hadîth was related to her that bad luck is in a woman, a horse and a house, she rejected it and quoted the following verse: "Whatever difficulties afflict you in the earth or in your selves have all been written down before-hand." (57: 22)

Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* stood at the graves of the unbelievers who were killed in the battle of Badr and addressed them saying: "Did you find that which your Sustainer promised to you?" It is narrated in a Hadîth that 'Umar *radiyallâhu 'anhû* asked: "Ô Rasûlullâh! Are you talking to the dead?" He replied: "You cannot hear more than that which they hear, but the only difference is that they cannot

reply." When this was mentioned to 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*, she replied: "He [Rasûlullâh] hadn't said that. What he had actually said was: "They [the dead unbelievers] now know for certain that whatever I had been informing them all along was the truth." In order to substantiate this, she recited the following verse of the Quran: "[O Prophet!] You cannot make the dead listen to your speech nor can you do so to those who are in their graves." The meaning of this is that the unbelievers could not even hear your speech.

Generally, people quote certain Ahâdîth in order to prove that *mut'ah* is *harâm*. However, 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* says that one of her students asked her for the Hadîth which shows that *mut'ah* is *harâm*. In reply to the student's question, she did not quote any Hadîth. Instead, she said: "The book of Allah is before us." She then recited the following verse: "Those who safeguard their private parts, except on their wives and slave girls, for there is no blame on them." Based on this verse, apart from these two cases (i.e. wives and slave girls), no other method is permissible. [Since *mut'ah* does not fall within the parameters of these two cases, it is *harâm*.]

Abû Hurayrah *radiyallâhu 'anhu* narrates a Hadîth concerning an illegitimate child in which it is reported that Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said that the illegitimate child is the worst of the three [the father, the mother, and the illegitimate child]. When 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* heard this, she said that it is not correct. The actual story is that there was a hypocrite who used to taunt and mock at Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. People informed him that apart from his being a hypocrite, this person is also an illegitimate child. Upon hearing this, Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: "He is the worst of the three." That is, he is worse than his father and mother [who engaged in the forbidden act of adultery]. This was a specific incident and did not apply to everyone because Allah says: "No one will bear the burden of

another's sins." In other words, the fault lies with the mother, what sin did the child commit that he should be labelled an evil person?

The science of jurisprudence

In the time of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) was not a codified and systemised branch of knowledge whereby the *Sahâbah* could go and learn it in a systematic manner. Without doubt, they could ask numerous questions to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and find out the ruling for various situations. However, due to extreme respect for him and because the Quran had prohibited excessive questioning, the *Sahâbah* rarely questioned Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. The *Musnad Dârmî* narrates from 'Abdullâh ibn 'Abbâs *radiyallâhu 'anhû* that the *Sahâbah* asked only 13 *masâ'il* to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and that all these 13 *masâ'il* are mentioned in the Quran. Based on this, the method of learning *fiqh* from him was that the *Sahâbah* used to watch him carefully when he executed his actions such as *wudû'*, *salâh*, fasting, *hajj*, *zakâh*, etc. By judging certain situations and circumstances, they deduced the prerequisites and fundamentals of these acts and also established whether they were permissible, compulsory, abrogated, etc. However, the *Sahâbiyât* rarely found an opportunity to benefit from this method. Furthermore, the *masâ'il* that are specific to women could not be discussed in the presence of everyone. It is for this reason that the *Sahâbiyât* had greater cause to ask and question Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. 'Â'ishah *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* says: "How good the women of the Ansâr were! Modesty and shyness did not prevent them from gaining an understanding of the religion."

In short, the Ṣaḥābah and Ṣaḥābiyāt benefitted in various ways from this method of learning. On the basis of this, they have been divided into three categories:-

- 1) Those from whom many *masā'il* are narrated.
- 2) Those from whom very few *masā'il* are narrated.
- 3) Those who fall between these two categories (i.e. not too many nor too few).

The Ṣaḥābiyāt who are mentioned in these three categories together with the Ṣaḥābah are as follows:-

- 1) From the first group regarding whom 'Allāmah Ibn Hazm *rahmatullāhi 'alayh* says that if all their *fatwās* (legal verdicts) had to be gathered, each person's *fatwās* will fill voluminous books, 'Ā'ishah *radiyallāhu 'anhā* is included in this group.
- 2) From the third group whose *fatwās* will fill booklets - Umme Salamah *radiyallāhu 'anhā* is included.
- 3) From the second group whose *fatwās* are very few, there are many Ṣaḥābiyāt. Some of them are: Umme 'Aṭiyyah, Ṣaḥābiyāt, Ḥafṣah, Umme Ḥabībah, Ya'lā bint Qālif, Asmā', Umme Sharīk, Khawlā', 'Ātikah bint Zayd, Sahlah, Juwayriyah, Maymūnah, Fāṭimah, Fāṭimah bint Qays, and others *radiyallāhu 'anhunna*.

CONCLUSION

THE STATUS OF THE SAHĀBIYĀT

There is difference of opinion with regard to which Sahābī is the greatest. It is the belief of the majority of the *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah* that the *al-Khulafā' ar-Rāshidūn* are the greatest from among the Sahābah. Furthermore, the greatest among them is according to the order in which they were made caliphs. However, 'Allāmah Ibn Hazm Zāhirī *rahmatullāhi 'alayh* is of the opinion that the pure wives of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* are the greatest. He has delved into the matter in great detail in his book *al-Milal wan Nihal*. In addition to this, he has answered those Quranic verses and Ahādīth which apparently show that the status of the Sahābiyāt is less than that of the Sahābah. However, we do not wish to delve into these discourses at this stage. Instead, the virtues of the Sahābiyāt which could be established from a religious and moral point of view will be mentioned from the Ahādīth. In this way we will be able to establish that the same reasons for which the virtues of the Sahābah is established could also be applied in order to establish the virtues and status of the Sahābiyāt.

In Islam, the greatest virtue is considered to be the earliest to accept Islam. This virtue is one of the most prominent of Abū Bakr's *radiyallāhu 'anhu* many virtues. However, two women also share this virtue with him, i.e. Khadījah *radiyallāhu 'anhā* and Sumayyah *radiyallāhu 'anhā* or Umme Ayman *radiyallāhu 'anhā*. In Sahīh Bukhārī, under the virtues of Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu 'anhu*, the following narration of 'Ammār *radiyallāhu 'anhu* is mentioned: "I had seen Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* when there was no one with him except five slaves, two women, and Abū Bakr."

After the virtue of "the earliest to accept Islam", the virtue of "the earliest to undertake the *hijrah*" is considered to be the

greatest . All the *muhājirāt*²³ share this virtue with the Sahābah who emigrated. ‘Allāmah Ibn Hazm Zāhirī *rahmatullāhi ‘alayh* writes in *al-Milal wan Nihal*:

“We have no doubt that the wives of the Sahābah share with them the virtue of being from among the first women to emigrate. [With regard to the emigration], some women surpassed other women while some men surpassed other men. Some women surpassed many men and at the same time some men surpassed many women. Allah has not mentioned any stage of virtue of the men without mentioning the women as well, e.g. He says: “Muslim men and Muslim women...”

The first emigration was to Abyssinia. In this emigration, one of the Sahābiyāt attained an honour which was not attained by anyone from among those who emigrated to Abyssinia. Abū Mûsâ Ash‘arī *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* narrates: “When we heard about Rasûlullâh’s *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* emigration towards Madînah, we also decided to emigrate together with 52 or 53 people of our people. In fulfilment of this purpose, we boarded a ship and left for Madînah. Coincidentally, we landed in Abyssinia and met with Ja‘far ibn Abî Tâlib *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* and his companions. Ja‘far *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* informed us that Rasûlullâh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* had sent them here [Abyssinia] and ordered them to remain here. You should therefore stay with us. We therefore opted to remain behind with them until Khaybar was conquered. We all left together and met with Rasûlullâh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* at Khaybar. All these Sahābah who came from Abyssinia were

²³ Female Sahābiyāt who emigrated from Makkah to Madînah.

blessed with the honour that all those who did not participate in the conquest of Khaybar did not receive any of the spoils of war, with the exception of these people. Some of the other Sahâbah also commented on this by saying that despite their emigrating first [to Madînah], these people who came later [referring to those who came from Abyssinia] have received a share of the booty [while we have been left out]. Asmâ' bint 'Umayy *radiyallâhu 'anhâ* was also among those who came from Abyssinia. Once she went to visit Hafsah radiyallâhu 'anhâ. Coincidentally, 'Umar *radiyallâhu 'anhu* also arrived. Upon seeing her, he enquired from his daughter as to who this woman was. Hafsah radiyallâhu 'anhâ replied that she is Asmâ' bint 'Umayy. Upon hearing her name, he said: "She is an Abyssinian, she is the one who lives at the sea side." Asmâ' bint 'Umayy replied: "Yes, I am the one." Upon this 'Umar said: "We emigrated before you, we have more rights than you to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*." Upon hearing this, Asmâ' became annoyed and said: "O 'Umar! You are wrong. I swear by Allah that you used to be in the company of Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, he used to feed the poor among you, and teach the ignorant among you. In the meantime, we were in the wretched place of Abyssinia where we were in turmoil and fear. All this was solely for Allah and His Messenger *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. I swear by Allah that as long as I do not mention all this to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, I will not eat and drink. I swear by Allah that I will not lie, be deceptive nor add anything to what you have said." When Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* arrived, she informed him of what transpired. After listening to everything that she had to say, he replied: "His rights over me are not more than the rights that you have over me. 'Umar and his companions only emigrated once while you people who travelled by ship emigrated twice." Asmâ' states that Abû Mûsâ and the others who came by ship used to come time and

again to her in order to ask her about this Hadîth. They did not consider anything more joyous and excellent than this. She says: "Abû Mûsâ used to ask me about this Hadîth time and again."

A major factor of virtue and status is love for the Messenger. It was because of this love that some of the Sahâbiyât reached a stage of great closeness to Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam that was reserved only for a select group of Sahâbah. It is mentioned in Sahîh Muslim that apart from his wives, Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam used to avoid visiting other women with the exception of Umme Sulaym radiyallâhu 'anhâ [the mother of Anas radiyallâhu 'anhu]. Once he was asked the reason for this. He replied: "I feel sorry for her because her brother was martyred while in battle with me." The kindness and love that he displayed in visiting her was also expressed by her when being of any service to him. It is mentioned in Bukhârî, Kitâbul Isti'dhân, that when he used to visit her, she would spread out a mat for him upon which he used to relax. When he used to get up and go, she would collect all his perspiration in a bottle. At the time of her death, she made a bequest that when she is being embalmed, this blessed perspiration should also be added." Umme Harâm radiyallâhu 'anhâ, the aunt of Anas radiyallâhu 'anhu, was also blessed with this honour [of having Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam] visiting her. It was a well-known fact that whenever he had occasion to go to Qubâ', he would definitely visit her. She used to offer food to him which he would partake of. When he used to fall asleep, she would remove lice from his hair.²⁴

²⁴ Umme Sulaym (mentioned previously) and Umme Harâm radiyallâhu 'anhumâ were sisters. The scholars are unanimous that they were mahrams of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam. There is therefore no question of purdah with them. (Refer to at-Ta'liq as-Sabîh, vol. 7, p. 128 for further details)

Apart from specific Sahâbiyât, some of them enjoyed a social status in being part of a particular tribe or family. The status that they enjoyed included all those who were part of that tribe. For example, once he expressed his wish to marry Umme Hâni *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*. She excused herself by saying that she was too old and that she had children [whose upbringing was very necessary]. Upon this, he mentioned the virtue of Quraysh women in general by saying: "Among the women who ride camels, the Quraysh women are the best. They love their infant children and take great pains in safeguarding the wealth of their husbands."

The Anṣâr enjoy a special status in Islam. Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* had great love for their men and women alike. Anas *radiyallâhu 'anhu* says: "Once the Anṣâr women and children were returning from a wedding. Upon seeing them, Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* stood up and said the following words three times: 'You are the most beloved in my sight.'" In another narration it is mentioned that an Anṣârî woman came to Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* with a child of hers and began conversing with him. It was at this time that he stated the following two times: "I swear by that being in whose hands is my life, you are the most beloved to me."

Based on these virtues, the Khulafâ' Râshidûn also maintained this honour and status of the Sahâbiyât. It is mentioned in Sahîh Muslim that Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* used to visit Umme Ayman *radiyallâhu 'anhâ*. After his demise, Abû Bakr *radiyallâhu 'anhu* said to 'Umar *radiyallâhu 'anhu*: "Come, let's go and visit her just as Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* used to go to visit her." When they went to her, she began crying. They asked her: "Why are you crying? The status that Rasûlullâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* received from Allah is far better for him [than his being in our midst]." She replied: "I am not crying because I do not

know this. Instead, I am crying because the chain of revelation from the heavens has been cut off." Upon hearing this, both of them began crying as well.

Apart from the general Ṣahābiyât, the status that has been accorded to the wives of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam is unparalleled in the history of women. When one of Rasûlullâh's wives had passed away, 'Abdullâh ibn 'Abbâs radiyallâhu 'anhu fell into prostration. People asked him the reason for falling into prostration at such a time. He replied: "When you see any of the signs of *qiyâmah*, you should prostrate. Which of the signs of *qiyâmah* can be greater than the demise of one of his pure wives?" When Maymûnah radiyallâhu 'anhâ passed away at the place called Ṣarîf, 'Abdullâh ibn 'Abbâs radiyallâhu 'anhu was also present. He said: "This is Maymûnah! When you carry her *janâzah*, don't dare move it around or shuffle it."

Some of the Ṣahâbah used to bequest their properties in favour of Rasûlullâh's sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam wives out of love for them and the high esteem they held them in. 'Abdur Raḥmân ibn 'Auf radiyallâhu 'anhu had bequested an orchard in favour of the pure wives of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam which was later sold at a price of 4 000 dirhams.

Even the Khulafâ' used to treat them with great respect and honour. During his Khilâfat, 'Umar radiyallâhu 'anhu prepared nine utensils for each of the wives. When any high quality grain used to come, he would distribute it among them in these utensils.

When 'Umar radiyallâhu 'anhu prepared to leave [for Makkah] as the leader of those going on hajj, he took the wives of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam with great honour. 'Uthmân and 'Abdur Raḥmân ibn 'Auf radiyallâhu 'anhumâ were appointed to be with the riders. They used to be in the front and rear and did not permit any of the other riders to

come close. When the wives got off at any of the stops, these two Sahâbah did not permit anyone to come near them.

The high level of respect and confidence which the general Muslims had for the wives of Rasûlullâh sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam can be gauged from the fact that people used to bring their young children to 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ and request her to make *du'â* for them. 'Â'ishah bint Talhah radiyallâhu 'anhâ was brought up under the tutelage of 'Â'ishah radiyallâhu 'anhâ. She says: "People used to come to me from far off places because of the close contact which I had with 'Â'ishah. The old and the young used to come to me, give me gifts, and send letters from all over."

All these incidents establish the fact that Islam has raised the status of both men and women. The Khulafâ' Râshidûn and the general Muslims maintained their status. However, the Sahâbiyât attained this status solely on account of their religiosity, character, and perfect way of life. Even today, women can attain this high status with these very qualities.

GLOSSARY

(Explanation of Islamic terminology)

Ahlus suffah: A group of poor Sahâbah who lived in a raised platform in the Musjid-e-Nabawî in Madînah.

Du'â': Supplication.

Duff: A type of drum.

Ghayr mahram: A person with whom marriage is permissible. This includes a person's cousins. Strict purdah has to be observed with such people.

'Ibâdah: The act of worshipping Allâh I. This also refers to the different acts of worship.

'Îd khuṭbah: The sermon which is delivered on the day of 'Îd.

'Îd gâh: The place where the 'Îd ṣalâh and khuṭbah is performed.

Ihrâm: Two white sheets worn by a male performing ḥajj or 'umrah. This also refers to the state in which a person is when he/she is performing ḥajj or 'umrah.

Ishrâq: An optional ṣalâh offered approximately 15 minutes after sunrise. There is great virtue in offering this ṣalâh.

I'tikâf: The act of secluding oneself in the masjid and occupying oneself in the worship of Allâh I. This act is normally fulfilled during the last ten days of the month of Ramadân. Women may also fulfil this worship in their homes – the place which they set aside for their daily ṣalâh, etc.

Jâhilîyyah: Generally refers to the era before the advent of Islam.

Jubbah: A type of coat or gown.

Maradul maut: The illness of a person after which he passes away.

Masâ'il: Plural of mas'alah.

Mas'alah: An issue, problem, question, rule or regulation.

Mut'ah: A marriage contracted for a specified time and date. Such a marriage is specifically contracted for sexual enjoyment. This is absolutely harâm in Islam.

Niqâb: A face piece used by women to conceal their faces.

Purdah: Refers to the seclusion of women from strangers. There are different stages of purdah, the highest of which is that the woman should not emerge from her home except for a valid Islamic reason. Purdah is the equivalent of the Arabic term Hijâb.

Sadaqah: Charity. This could refer to compulsory and optional charity.

Tahajjud: An optional salâh offered in the latter part of the night. There is tremendous virtue in offering this salâh.

Tawâf: The act of going around the Ka'bah seven times.

Tayammum: The act of using pure soil in order to purify oneself in the absence of water or other valid reasons.

Umrah: The lesser pilgrimage. It is similar to hajj with the exception that many of the rites of hajj are not included and that it could be performed throughout the year.

